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## News Tracker ... What's new with old news

## States

**Slain baby in Texas:** The attorney for a woman who admitted killing her baby daughter by severing the child's arms says his client is disoriented.

Dena Schlosser of Plano, Texas, is charged with capital murder. Her 11-month-old daughter, Margaret, died last week after her arms were severed. "She's very confused about her situation," David Haynes, Schlosser's court-appointed attorney, said in Monday's edition of The Dallas Morning News. "I don't think she's presently competent to stand trial."

**Divorce from father:** A judge has ordered the legal guardians of a New Hampshire boy who "divorced" his murderer father to explain why they have not provided an accounting of the teenager's finances.

Ron and Rita Lazisky, of Sandown, N.H., were ordered by Norfolk County Probate Judge Robert Langlois to appear in court to explain why they should not be found in contempt of a court order, Ron Lazisky said.

However, the Laziskys never got Langlois' order to produce an accounting, Lazisky said. They only learned of it two weeks ago when their former lawyer got a call from the court clerk asking why they hadn't submitted it.

**Oklahoma City bombing:** Terry Nichols admitted during plea negotiations in his state trial last year that he played a major role in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Nichols admitted to prosecutors in a signed statement that he helped Timothy McVeigh make the bomb that killed 168 people in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995, The Oklahoma reported.

Nichols, 49, is serving life sentences without parole for separate convictions in state and federal courts for his role in the bombings.

## World

**International space station:** The U.S.-Russian crew of the international space station successfully re-docked a spaceship at a new port on the station Monday in preparation for two spacewalks early next year, Mission Control said.

Russian Salizhan Sharipov and American Leroy Chiao re-docked the Soyuz TMA-S spaceship after a 23-minute flight from the Pirs docking port to the Zarya cargo module, Mission Control spokesman Valery Lyndin said.



**Delaware River oil spill:** Volunteers help a worker with the Delaware County Animal Control round up animals harmed by a crude oil spill on the river's bank in Essington, Pa. Divers found a six-foot gash in a cargo tank on the Greek-owned tanker that leaked 30,000 gallons of crude oil into the Delaware River, spokesmen for the Coast Guard and the vessel's owner said Sunday. The spill, the worst on the river in nearly a decade, stranded commercial vessels trying to move goods through the busy Port of Philadelphia, killed or injured hundreds of birds and angered residents along shoreline communities.

**Gaza withdrawal:** Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was set on a collision course Monday with his most loyal coalition partner, the Shinui Party, raising prospects that early elections that could postpone an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Sharon has been walking a political tightrope since he lost his parliamentary majority several months ago, with hard-liners bolting over his plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements in 2005.

**Sudan aid groups:** Sudan ordered Monday the expulsion of the directors of two British-based humanitarian organizations, accusing them of sending "signals of support" to rebels in Darfur.

Sudan's Humanitarian Affairs Commission said the program directors of Save the Children UK and Oxfam International had violated the law on nonintervention in the country's political, ethnic or sectarian issues.

"[Y]ou must leave the country within 48 hours," the acting commissioner, Abdel Khaliq Al-Husseini, said in letters addressed to the local directors of the aid organizations.

**Victims of Pinochet regime:** Chilean Pres-

ident Ricardo Lagos on Sunday said he planned to compensate thousands of people who were imprisoned and tortured under the regime of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Lagos said he made up his mind after studying a gruesome report on torture during Pinochet's 1973-90 regime. The report was prepared by a commission that heard testimonies from 35,000 people.

Pinochet's right-wing dictatorship fiercely suppressed leftists, dissidents and others perceived as opponents, imprisoning, exiling, torturing and killing thousands. Many of them simply disappeared.

**Nuclear inspectors in South Korea:** The U.N. nuclear watchdog will send a group of inspectors to South Korea next week for additional investigations into the country's past secret nuclear experiments, officials said Monday.

The inspection follows a decision Friday by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency not to refer South Korea's nuclear experiments to the U.N. Security Council.

The IAEA's board of governors criticized South Korea for conducting plutonium and uranium experiments in 1982 and 2000 without reporting them to the agency.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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# Staying Navy a bonus

## Some sailors qualify for big bucks to re-enlist

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER  
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — The Navy is giving an early holiday gift to sailors in hard-to-fill jobs who re-enlist.

The Navy has released an updated list of bonuses for sailors in jobs that the service needs the most — the first revision of the Navy's Selective Reenlistment Bonus in more than a year.

Fifty-four job ratings and Navy Enlisted Classifications have been added to the list, according to Lt. Jim LeVine, a spokesman for the Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tenn. Fifty-five ratings have been dropped from the list and are no longer eligible for more money. Nearly 200 job classifications are on the bonus list.

Nuclear-trained sailors can get the biggest bonus for re-enlisting.

Those with at least six years of service but no more than 10 can get as much as \$65,000. Sailors eligible for the Enlisted Supervisor Retention Pay can get even more — \$100,000 — if they meet the requirements.

The Enlisted Supervisor Retention Pay program is separate from the Selective Reenlistment Bonus and is designed to keep senior enlisted supervisors in critical jobs. Those who accept the supervisor bonus are not eligible for the Selective Reenlistment Bonus.

Navy announcements on the Selective Reenlistment Bonus and Enlisted Supervisor Retention Pay Program can be found at [www.persnavy.mil](http://www.persnavy.mil)

A Selective Reenlistment Bonus Calculator can be found at: [www.staynavy.navy.mil](http://www.staynavy.navy.mil)

Cryptologic technicians, hospital corpsmen and fire controlmen are also on the revised list. A second-class petty officer trained as a cryptologic technician and with four years of service would get \$45,000 if he or she re-enlists for a six-year term. For three years, the bonus drops to a little more than \$31,000.

A third-class petty officer classified as a fire controlman and with three years of service would get more than \$40,000 for signing up for six years. He or she would get about \$19,000 for re-enlisting for three years.

The Selective Reenlistment Bonus is a program that helps the Navy keep sailors in job ratings or Navy Enlisted Classification codes that are difficult to fill. Sailors must have served at least 21 months and be eligible to re-enlist in the Navy three or more years.

Sailor bonuses are calculated by a formula that includes such factors as time in service, pay grade and the length of the re-enlistment.

Award increases became effective Nov. 15, while decreased award levels will become effective Dec. 15, according to a Navy message.

Future Selective Reenlistment Bonus lists are to be adjusted more frequently so the Navy can continue to keep sailors in critical jobs, the message said.

E-mail Scott Schonauer at: [schonauers@mail.esr.pcs.mil](mailto:schonauers@mail.esr.pcs.mil)

# Santa's coming to Tinsel Town at Kadena Air Base on Friday

BY FRED ZIMMERMAN  
Stars and Stripes

Kadena Air Base's annual Tinsel Town holiday celebration is set to kick off this weekend with numerous events to entertain both young and old.

Festivities begin at 5 p.m. Friday with a holiday parade on Douglas Avenue from O'Connor Gym to the Schilling Community Center, where Tinsel Town is located. The parade will include floats and marchers from various groups and youth organizations, according to Tracy Thomas, programs coordinator for Schilling Community Center.

The parade will last about a half-hour, ending with Santa Claus riding into Tinsel Town on a fire truck. The annual tree lighting then will be held.

The town area officially opens Friday with the parade and closes that night at 9 p.m., Thomas said. It opens again Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 7:30 p.m. Attractions including carnival rides, moon bounces, laser tag and game booths will be on hand, Thomas said. Food booths also will be set up, as well as Santa's house, where children can whisper their Christmas wishes to St. Nick.

*Festivities begin at 5 p.m. Friday with a holiday parade on Douglas Avenue from O'Connor Gym to the Schilling Community Center, where Tinsel Town is located.*

In conjunction with Tinsel Town on Friday night, a family holiday craft workshop will be held in the community center's ballroom from 7 to 9 p.m. For those wanting to purchase crafts rather than make them, a craft fair is scheduled Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the ballroom.

Other weekend events include a talent showcase Saturday beginning at 5 p.m., and a holiday "start-back-off" Sunday at 2 p.m.

While Tinsel Town isn't officially open until Friday, one attraction is kicking off early and lasting one day longer. A new-age twist to the Christmas classic "The Nutcracker" will be held twice a day beginning Thursday and ending Monday.

The Nutcracker Cirque uses trapeze artists, jugglers and acrobats, among others, to tell the story.

Performances are 5 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Thursday; 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Friday; Saturday, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.; and 7:40 p.m. and 9 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Monday. All shows will be in the big tent in the community center parking lot.

Contact the Schilling Community Center at 634-1387 for more information on any of the events.

E-mail Fred Zimmerman at: [zimmermanf@ststripes.com](mailto:zimmermanf@ststripes.com)



SHANE BAILEY/Courtesy of Iwakuni Single Marine Program

Motorcycles are aligned across the parking area at Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station's Hornets' Nest the day of the 2002 Toys for Tots Thunder Run. The annual event kicks off the campaign to provide donated Christmas presents to children at area orphanages.

# Cacophony jump starts Toys for Tots campaign

BY GREG TYLER  
Stars and Stripes

The early-December roar of about 150 motorcyclists riding caravan-style through the base is the sound that signifies the start of Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station's Toys for Tots campaign.

The annual cacophony — named the Thunder Run — takes place at noon on Sunday. About 100 motorcycle enthusiasts in the Japanese community join more than 50 base riders as they cruise the perimeter of the air station.

"Oh, yes, it gets plenty loud. People around here are used to regularly hearing aircraft engines, but this draws even their attention," Jay Stovall, Single Marine Program coordinator, said Monday from his office at the SMP facility, the Hornets' Nest. "Then we come back here and park the motorcycles and have a great time with a barbecue."

One planned highlight is a performance by taiko drummers sponsored by Iwakuni's Japan and America Friendship Association.

"All we ask is that those participating in the Thunder Run, or attending the rest of the afternoon event, bring a new toy, still in its original packaging, with a value of \$25 or less," Stovall said.

Immediately after the Thunder Run, and before the cookout and entertainment, a short ceremony signifying the start of Toys for Tots is scheduled.

The same day, Marines and sailors wearing dress uniforms will work shifts at the base's Marine Corps Exchange entrance. "They are just there to open doors for people; that's all," Stovall said. "It's not to solicit gifts from customers but just

to remind them that we are here, and so are the donation boxes."

The primary participants are service members involved with the Single Marine Program.

Sgt. Shane Bailey, 23, of Marine Aviation Group 12, has assisted Stovall with Toys for Tots for three years. He's excited about his fourth year serving as general coordinator for the program.

Large donation boxes will be at various commands throughout the air station until Christmas, Bailey said.

Last year Iwakuni Marines collected enough toy donations to cover the floor of a racquetball court next to the Hornets' Nest, Stovall recalled.

"It's really become a big thing here," Bailey said. "In past years, we've collected so many presents that we started giving each child from the Japanese orphanages two toys, instead of just one. We're hoping to do the same this year."

Toys for Tots is a worldwide U.S. Marine Corps Reserve program to collect new toys during October, November and December and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children.

"It's about helping others. When they come back from delivering the presents, you can see it in their faces," Stovall said. "You can just see how their (Marines') self-esteem improves, making them much happier during the holidays."

"And if they're happier, they work better, they get in less trouble, there's less drinking, less depression ... it's win-win all the way."

Call DSN 253-3585 for more information about the Iwakuni Thunder Run and Toys for Tots campaign.

E-mail Greg Tyler at: [tylberg@ststripes.com](mailto:tylberg@ststripes.com)

## CDC to help shoppers

**SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan** — Sasebo's Child Development Centers at the main base and Harjo Housing Village are open at no cost from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. Friday, Dec. 10 and Dec. 17 so adults can do some "secret" Christmas shopping.

Make reservations now with the Child Development Center. Space is limited.

Registration deadlines are Wednesday, and then Dec. 8 and Dec. 15.

For Harjo child care call DSN 252-8842. For main base child care, call DSN 252-2985.

## Sasebo Christmas

**SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan** — Base and local residents are welcome to join Christmas in The Park festivities Friday in Nimutz Park.

Santa Claus will be there to meet children and pose for free Polaroid photos.

Planned activities include carnival games, air toys, arts and crafts, live stage entertainment, a bonfire and a parade. The event is from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Call DSN 252-3500 for more information.

From staff reports

# 4 U.S. troops killed in attacks; 1 dies in crash

## Suicide bomber at checkpoint attack kills 7 Iraqis; Allawi eases curfew in Baghdad

### U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Sunday, at least 1,237 members of the U.S. military had died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 961 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is seven higher than the Defense Department's tally, which was last updated Wednesday at 10 a.m. EDT.

The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,099 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 852 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A U.S. soldier died Sunday in a traffic accident north of Baghdad.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ No identifications reported.

By MAGGIE MICHAEL

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two American soldiers were killed and three wounded in a roadside bomb explosion in northwestern Baghdad, the U.S. command said. The victims were members of the U.S. Army's Task Force Baghdad, which is in charge of security in the capital.

Two U.S. Marines were also killed in a weekend bombing south of the capital, a U.S. official said Monday. U.S. British and Iraqi forces have been sweeping through the area to clear Sunni insurgents from a string of towns and cities between Baghdad and the Shiite shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala.

Separately, the military said one U.S. soldier died and two were injured in a vehicle accident 30 miles northwest of the town of Kut in eastern Iraq.

Also Monday, a suicide bomber blew up a car Monday at a police checkpoint in western Iraq, killing seven government security force members and injuring nine in the latest strike against the country's fledgling police and National Guard troops, Iraqi officials said.

U.S. forces immediately sealed off the road after the insurgent attack against Iraqi security forces in Baghdad, 120 miles northwest of the capital, police Lt. Mohammed al-Fehdawi said.

A hospital official there, Hatim Ahmed, confirmed seven police and Iraqi National Guard members were killed and nine were wounded.

In other developments, Iraqi authorities announced an easing of the curfew in Baghdad im-



Iraqi National Guard members arrest suspected gas black marketers in Baghdad on Monday.

posed this month in the run-up to the U.S.-led offensive on the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah.

Effective Tuesday, the curfew will begin at 11 p.m. and end at 5 a.m., a statement from Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's office said.

Elsewhere, gunmen stormed a police station, gunned the city of Samarra late Sunday, a spokesman said. The attackers, who faced no opposition, looted the armory and commandeered several police cars before leaving the area.

U.S. troops arrived at the station Monday morning and arrested two dozen people, the policeman said.

In Basra, British and Iraqi troops were deployed around the headquarters of the Iraqi National Guard southern regional headquarters after the chief staff,

Brig. Gen. Dina al-Kadhimi, refused to accept an order from Baghdad to remove himself from his post, Iraqi officials said.

Al-Kadhimi was to have been replaced by the national guard chief in Amarah, Salah al-Maliki. The standoff was continuing Monday afternoon.

South of Baghdad, U.S. and Iraqi forces launched raids Sunday that killed 17 suspected insurgents, Iraqi police said. The raids included a dawn speedboat assault by U.S. Marines and British and Iraqi troops on suspected insurgent hideouts along the Euphrates River, British media reported.

The speedboat assault was the biggest operation of its kind so far in Iraq, with 130 troops racing up the Euphrates in boats armed with machine guns and grenade launchers, according to the British reports.

However, the raid produced only a few small weapons caches and documents believed buried by a Saddam Hussein loyalist, British media said.

U.S. Marines, Iraqi commandos and British troops launched an offensive known as "Operation Plymouth Rock" in the area last Tuesday as a follow-up to the assault on Fallujah.

The British Embassy on Monday banned its staff from traveling on the highway between Baghdad and the city's international airport due to a surge of attacks on the vital thoroughfare.

The travel warning issued by the British Foreign Office also urged Britons to defer even essential travel to Iraq due to deteriorating security. Previously, it advised against all but essential travel to Iraq.

Meanwhile, the governor of Iraq's Shiite-dominated Najaf province said Monday that police had arrested his own security chief after uncovering an alleged plot to assassinate top regional officials, including the governor himself.

The aide, Ali al-Sheibani, was detained late Sunday, Gov. Adnan al-Zurfi told reporters.

# In new video, bin Laden deputy vows to continue fighting U.S.

By SALAH NASRAWI

The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — Osama bin Laden's top deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, said in a videotape aired Monday — but apparently taped before the U.S. presidential election — that there was no difference between the two candidates. He also vowed to keep fighting the United States until Washington changed its policies.

In a brief excerpt broadcast on Al-Jazeera television, al-Zawahiri said: "As for elections in America, the two candidates are competing to win the satisfaction of Israel," saying that fact proved "there will be no solution with America without forcing it to surrender to justice."

In the tape, al-Zawahiri said: "The results of the elections do not matter for us. Vote whoever you want, Bush, Kerry or the devil himself. This does not concern us. What concerns us is to purge

our land from the aggressors."

Days before the election, bin Laden said in similar video footage that the United States must stop threatening the security of Muslims if it wants to avoid "another Manhattan" — referring to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Addressing the American people, bin Laden also said, "Your security is not in the hands of Kerry, Bush or al-Qaida. Your security is in your own hands... Any state that does not mess with our security has naturally guaranteed its own security."

It was unclear if Al-Jazeera planned to show more of the latest al-Zawahiri tape.

In the segment broadcast, al-Zawahiri also offered the American people what he called "one last advice," adding, "I am sure that they will not heed it."

"You have to choose between one of two methods to deal with Muslims: either on mutual respect and exchange of interests, or to deal with them as if they are spoils of war," al-Zawahiri said.

The United States has offered a \$25 million reward for the capture of bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, who are believed to be hiding in the border area of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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al-Zawahiri



# Flu vaccine plagued by delivery problems

Officials say all troops in Iraq will be immunized; medics in Tikrit ask where the doses are



PHOTOS BY STEVE LIEWER  
Stars and Stripes

**Above:** Pfc. Barnaby Johnson, 23, a medic at Forward Operating Base Wilson near Ad Daw, Iraq, gives a flu shot to Spc. Claude Weathers, 22, of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment. Johnson said his base has plenty of flu vaccine for the soldiers there. 1st Infantry Division officials said front-line troops get highest priority for the scarce vaccine.

**Right:** This sign on the door of the 67th Combat Support Hospital at Forward Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq, warns soldiers the CSH is out of flu vaccine



BY STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq** — The shortage of flu vaccine plaguing the United States and Europe is also causing trouble for some troops in north-central Iraq.

Doctors at the 67th Combat Support Hospital in Tikrit and one of its support units, the 429th Medical Evacuation Battalion, say they have far less than the amount of vaccine they need.

A sign on the door of the hospital tent at FOB Speicher warns patients there will be no more flu shots until further notice.

"There is a mad scramble for vaccine. It's not plentiful. Not everyone has gotten it,"

Maj. James Stein, chief of preventative medicine for the 1st Infantry Division, is less worried about his line troops. He said that 61 percent of the division's soldiers have received their shots, and he expects everyone will be immunized by Dec. 15.

"The troops in the theater obviously have priority," Stein said. "We're going to have enough, but the supply's a little thin."

Capt. Sharon Parker, a family nurse practitioner who is the 67th CSH's immunization coordinator, isn't sure her troops will fare as well. She said she requested 4,000 doses of flu vaccine, enough to cover 2,700 medical personnel plus some spare. The unit has been given 1,000 doses and isn't currently expecting to receive any more.

But medical officials in Baghdad said Monday the shots are on

the way.

Lt. Col. Marc Caouette, Multi-National Corps-Iraq pharmacy consultant in Baghdad, said there is no shortage of vaccine for troops. He called the situation in Tikrit, "an isolated incident."

The 67th CSH was supposed to give flu shots to everyone on base, Caouette said in a telephone interview from Baghdad on Monday. Another unit has been given the mission of giving shots to troops in that region, but that unit hasn't been able to get to there yet, he said.

**"There is a mad scramble for vaccine. It's not plentiful. Not everyone has gotten it."**

**Lt. Col. Bobby Jones**

Deputy commander for clinical services at the 67th Combat Support Hospital in Tikrit, Iraq

"We have [the vaccine]," he said, "but they didn't tell us that they were out. We actually shipped them 100 vials today."

Military bases can be incubators for disease. Some of the first cases of the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic that killed millions of people around the world cropped up at U.S. Army posts where soldiers

were training to fight in World War I.

"It'll just burn through a military camp," Parker said.

Col. Edwin Moore, commander of the 429th Medical Evacuation Battalion — a Georgia-based Army Reserve unit operating at Speicher — is frustrated over the shortage.

"We were told [the vaccine] was ordered and everything was fine, but it wasn't," Moore said. "We do not have enough. We've been ordered to get 100 percent [of the unit's soldiers vaccinated], and we will. But we don't know how."

Caouette said the military has enough vaccine in Iraq to inoculate all troops. He estimated that 75 percent of the troops have received the shot, and everyone should be inoculated by the end of next week.

So far, there have been no cases of flu reported in Iraq, Caouette said. But it's crucial that everyone get the shot, even though the military doesn't not fall into the high-risk category.

"We're not considered high-risk," he said, "but it's a national defense risk if a unit comes down with the flu."

Sam Amrhein contributed to this report.

E-mail Steve Liewer at: [liewers@mail.strips.osd.mil](mailto:liewers@mail.strips.osd.mil)

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# 1st ID breaks ground on new HQ in Iraq

## Unit to move from Saddam's palace in Tikrit to \$6.7 million facility south of Camp Speicher

By STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

TIKRIT, Iraq — The 1st Infantry Division has broken ground on a new headquarters building that soon should allow the Army to abandon Saddam Hussein's magnificent and grotesque palace complex in Tikrit.

The \$6.7 million, 60,000-square-foot building is being built south of Tikrit at Forward Operating Base Speicher, a sprawling former Iraqi air force base. It is expected to open in April, said Lt. Col. Keith Sled, the division's logistics officer, short-

ly after the division turns over control of its sector of Iraq to the 42nd Infantry Division.

The building will be home to the task force commander — currently, Maj. Gen. John Batiste — and his staff. Batiste's 22,000-soldier Task Force Danger patrols an area the size of West Virginia that is north and east of Baghdad, from 27 forward operating bases.

Lt. Col. John M. Larson, design engineer of the Wisconsin National Guard's 264th Engineer Battalion, which is supervising the project, said those bases will be returned to Iraqi control over time. The soldiers at those bases would move to Speicher, which is being planned as a longer-term home for troops in the region.

Currently about 6,000 officers and soldiers live at Speicher, Larson said. About 2,000 live at the division headquarters.

To accommodate future troops, Larson said, the division has requested another \$80 million from the Multi-National Coalition-Iraq military command in Baghdad. That money would build headquarters buildings, soldier barracks, communications and maintenance buildings for each of the task force's battalions. It's not clear yet if that money will be granted.

"Getting out of a place is not cheap," Larson said.

The current headquarters, which 1st ID calls Forward Operating Base Danger, is in Saddam's hometown complex of some 40 extravagant palaces overlooking the Tigris River.

The complex includes about 1.3 million square feet of floor space in impressive pink-marble palaces — far more than the task force needs. Saddam built the palaces in the 1990s.

The buildings look impressive but aren't terribly useful. Much of the space is wast-



PHOTOS BY DINA WANDLER/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Saddam Hussein's former showpiece palace in Tikrit is now the headquarters of the U.S. Army's Task Force Danger. The 1st Infantry Division has begun building a new \$6.7 million headquarters at nearby Forward Operating Base Speicher so the palace complex can be turned over to the Iraqi government.

ed on giant atriums and hallways. Viewed up close, the woodwork is cheap and the workmanship poor. The plumbing system is so bad that the gold-fixtured toilets can't be used.

"(Saddam) built things just to build them," said Larson, 53, of Superior, Wis., whose civilian job is with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "They weren't functional at all, and they were poorly constructed. But what a facade! From a distance, they look pretty nice."

Current and former members of Batiste's staff say the general never wanted to move into the palace complex, in part because of the discomfort over the U.S. occu-

pying forces living in the lavish homes of the former dictator.

But higher headquarters blocked any move until now, the staffers said. Despite the symbolism, the palaces worked well as a military headquarters because the walled compound is quite secure and the marble buildings well-fortified against the rockets and mortars that sometimes are aimed at it.

Sled, 43, of Hickory, Okla., said the Tikrit palaces eventually will be turned over to the government of Salah Ad Din province, which is headquartered in Tikrit. Government officials toured the palaces for the first time in August.

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The ornately covered back side of the palace overlooks the Tigris River.

# Some groups struggle to send care packages to troops

By DARRYL ENRIQUEZ

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

MILWAUKEE — As kindhearted and patriotic supporters of U.S. troops are learning, generosity has its price. The cost is about a buck a pound.

Business firms, hospitals, schools and police are among those who have experienced the sticker shock of sending packages to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And, in any mission, those who plan ahead tend to suffer the fewest casualties.

Campaigns that have worked hard for cash donations to ship the gathered goods are reaching their goals, while others that lack money have become bogged down, with donated supplies sitting in storage.

Dennis Mehring, public information officer for the 440th Airlift Wing in Milwaukee, said he gets at least two calls daily from groups that have collected goods and want to know if the unit's cargo planes can haul their packages to the troops for free.

The Airlift Wing transports troops and supplies to bases throughout the world, including the Arabian war zones.

"There's not a lot we can do for them," he said. "Federal law does not allow us to take these goods overseas. It's considered unfair competition with civilian carriers. And we simply don't have the room in our planes."



Waukesha Alderman Randy Radish sifts through boxes of food and personal items that will be shipped to Waukesha-based troops deployed overseas. He has gathered nearly 500 pounds of items and is hoping to get financial donations for shipping costs.

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL/KRT

One effort that's managed to stay on top of its shipping costs is Marshall Towne Millwork of Brookfield, Wis., a maker of kitchen, bathroom and storage cabinets.

"If you're going to do a big drive, you'd better get cooperation from local businesses to handle shipping costs," said Victor Aiello, the firm's area sales manager. "There's a lot of support in the communities for troops, and when word gets out about a drive, people are giving."

"However, the postage is significant — about a buck a pound. If organizers on the front end ask for cash for shipping, I'm confident there'd be a willing response," he said.

Aiello said the firm has already shipped thousands of pounds for goods to the war zones and recently participated in a large drive for postage.

Marshall Towne also helped Burlington

High School in Racine County, Wis., with the expense of shipping donations to the war zones.

One effort in need of shipping help is the Treats for Troops Campaign organized by Waukesha, Wis., Alderman Randy Radish. During the past few weeks, the campaign has collected nearly 500 pounds of food, toiletries, medicine and clothing from the three barrels it has out, but donors have given only \$50 for shipping.

"It's become a concern about raising enough money to send this stuff," he said.

Radish and helpers intend to ask those attending the Waukesha Christmas Parade for money and additional goods. The packages would go to the two Waukesha-based units now in the Middle East.

"I have no idea what to expect the day of the parade, but I'll take whatever we can get," he said.

The Brookfield Police Department has periodically shipped packages to overseas troops this year, and it tries to be cautious in the amount it collects to prevent the packages from outpacing the money it has for shipping.

"Shipping is costly, but we're fortunate that we have veterans groups and business and city employees giving what they can," police Capt. Phil Horter said.

## IN THE WORLD

## China, Southeast Asian nations OK trade pact



Seated from left: President Gloria Arroyo of the Philippines, Prime Ministers Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore and Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand are aided by traditionally dressed Laotians at a Monday signing ceremony at the ASEAN summit in Vientiane, Laos.

BY WILLIAM FOREMAN  
The Associated Press

VIENTIANE, Laos — China moved Monday to expand its influence in a region long dominated by the United States, signing an accord with Southeast Asian nations aimed at creating the world's largest free trade area by 2010 — a sprawling market of nearly 2 billion people.

China's concerns about securing vital sea lanes and feeding its booming economy's ravenous appetite for oil and raw materials were seen as key motivations for the trade pact with the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the group's annual summit in Laos.

But some analysts believe the agreement shows how an increasingly bold China is forging new alliances that would reduce, and possibly eventually challenge, America's influence in Asia.

"China is using its huge market as a bait to lure ASEAN countries

away from U.S. and Japan and build closer relations," said Chao Chien-min, a China watcher and political science professor at Taiwan's National Chengchi University.

"I think what Beijing has in mind is to forge good economic and trade relations now and then increase exchanges in other areas, particularly in the military and security area," Chao said.

The agreements signed Monday removed tariffs on goods and created a mechanism to resolve ASEAN-China trade disputes. The accord aims to end all tariffs by 2010, drawing ASEAN's combined economies — worth \$1 trillion — closer to China's \$1.4 trillion economy.

Ong Keng Yong, ASEAN's secretary-general, said trade with China would speed up with the free trade agreement. "So by the time this whole FTA (free trade agreement) is done, as we want to by 2010, it should become quite substantial: \$130 or \$140 billion, perhaps," he told reporters.

In comparison, the annual ASEAN-U.S. trade is \$120 billion and ASEAN-EU trade is \$110 billion per year, he said. Ong said it would be a long time before China surpassed the United States because the Americans are bigger investors in the region.

China's deal with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was sealed as the 10-nation group agreed to another pact that would build an ASEAN community, much like the European Union, by 2020.

On the summit sidelines, South Korea and ASEAN member Singapore concluded negotiations on a two-way free trade agreement. Japan and ASEAN member Philippines also agreed on major parts of a proposed accord — but officials from both sides said it would take six months to wrap it up. With a long row of Laotian women in long silk skirts standing behind him, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao witnessed the signing of the ASEAN-China accord along with Southeast Asian leaders.

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BY GEORGE JAHN  
The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — The U.N. nuclear agency agreed Monday on ways to police Iran's suspension of some nuclear programs, but at a U.S. official, branding Tehran a threat to world peace, said Washington might take the case to the Security Council.

In arguing for such a move, U.S. chief delegate Jackie Sanders listed more than a dozen open questions about Iran's nuclear intentions still before the agency despite a nearly two-year investigation of almost two decades of covert activities.

"This makes it clear that the IAEA cannot ... offer the necessary assurances that Iran is not attempting to produce nuclear material for weapons," she told the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

She spoke shortly after the board passed a resolution authorizing IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei to monitor Iran's commitment to freeze uranium enrichment activities that can produce either low-grade nuclear fuel or the raw material for atomic weapons.

The issue of suspension had dominated the meeting since the opening day on Thursday. Iran insisted on exempting some equipment, a demand that forced the meeting to reconvene on Monday after a weekend adjournment.

France, Germany and Britain, who negotiated a Nov. 3 agreement with Iran on suspension, came to the meeting saying the deal meant that all equipment used for enrichment must come to a standstill.

Iran had demanded that it be allowed to run 20 centrifuges for research purposes.

Seeking to avoid tough measures by the board that could have led to referral to the Security Council and possible sanctions, Iran appeared to give up its demands Sunday, delivering a letter to the agency pledging "not to conduct any testing with these sets of components."

ElBaradei, the IAEA head, urged Iran to keep suspension in place as long as possible. That, he said, was needed "to mitigate the confidence deficit" in Iran, its record of past clandestine activities and continued reluctance to fully cooperate with an agency probe of its nuclear agenda.

The proposed deal also commits Iran to a pledge not to reprocess plutonium — which it would be able to do in several years' time, once it completes work on a heavy water reactor in the city of Arak.

With the EU deal envisaging a light-water reactor for Iran — from which extraction of weapons-grade nuclear material is difficult — diplomats said the Europeans hoped Iran would not complete its heavy-water facility.

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Representatives of opposition presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko view documents Monday in Kiev as Ukraine's Supreme Court began discussing the validity of the results of last week's runoff election.

# Ukraine's Supreme Court hears appeal on election

## Ruling could pave way for opposition demand of new vote

By NATASHA LISOVA

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's Supreme Court discussed the validity of the presidential election results Monday, while an eastern province scheduled a referendum on autonomy and the opposition threatened to further paralyze the government through a blockade.

Outgoing President Leonid Kuchma said "we cannot in any instance allow the disintegration or division of Ukraine," the Interfax news agency reported. Fears of a split rose after Ukraine's giant industrial base, the eastern Donetsk region, scheduled a referendum on autonomy for Sunday.

Speaking at a meeting of eastern Ukrainian officials, Kuchma said he believed neither opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko nor Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich "wants to be president of one part of Ukraine."

The Supreme Court was considering an appeal by Yushchenko against official results of the Nov. 21 presidential runoff, which declared Yanukovich the winner. Yushchenko claims he was robbed of victory.

Under Ukrainian legislation, the court cannot rule on the overall results but can declare results invalid in individual precincts. Mykola Katerinchuk, a Yushchenko aide, said the appeal focused on results in eight eastern and southern Ukrainian regions — more than 15 million votes, almost half of the total cast in the runoff.

The opposition claimed "severe violations of Ukrainian legislation" and asked the court to annul the results, he said. It is also asking the court to name Yushchenko the winner because he narrowly won the election's first round on Oct. 31.

Justice Anatoly Yarema said the court would give Yanukovich's lawyers until 10 a.m. Tuesday to study the additional evidence presented by Yushchenko's team.

Stepan Havrysh, a key aide of Yanukovich, said his side was expecting a "fair decision ... taken without emotion."

"I expect that the judges will not overstep the law because it could end in a civil war," he said.

The ruling could pave the way for a new vote, which the opposition is demanding, or remove the only barrier to the inauguration of Yanukovich, who has the backing of Kuchma and the Kremlin — which still yields significant political and economic influence over energy-dependent Ukraine. Yanukovich was declared the winner with a margin of 871,402 votes.

Yanukovich said he would support a revote if allegations of fraud in the election are proven — but he said he had yet to see such proof.

"If there is evidence of falsification, I will agree with a decision to hold a new vote, he said, adding that he would call on residents of his giant support base in eastern Ukraine to participate. But Yanukovich warned that evidence of fraud must be proved first through a "clear, honest and transparent" investigation, and suggested that such a revote would be illegal.

While the Supreme Court's decision is likely to boost the legitimacy of whichever side it seems to favor, it could also fuel anger in the other camp. Thousands of pro-Yushchenko and pro-Yanukovich supporters massed outside the court at the start of the session, but by midafternoon, most pro-Yanukovich supporters had

left. Yushchenko rejected government appeals Sunday to call off tens of thousands of protesters and urged his backers to maintain their weeklong, round-the-clock vigil and blockades of the Cabinet building and the presidential administration.

His supporters refused to let anyone but security personnel enter the buildings, and some Cabinet ministers have complained the blockades are impeding the state's work.

# Spain's ex-premier defends government's response to bombing

By ED MCCULLOUGH

The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — Former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar defended his government's response to the Madrid train bombings in testimony Monday before skeptical lawmakers investigating the attack.

"I have been accused of being eager to blame the massacre on the terrorist gang ETA. If this were the case, one must admit that others beat me to it," Aznar said.

The local government of Spain's northern Basque region had also immediately blamed ETA and so had officials of the Socialist Party — then in opposition and now in government.

The toll in Spain's worst terrorist attack was 191 dead and more than 1,800 injured.

Aznar was called to testify by center-left parties that allege his conservative Popular Party underestimated the threat of Islamic terrorism, and misled Spaniards by continuing to blame the



Aznar

Critics say the government's primary concern in insisting on the ETA angle was to salvage national elections three days later, amid fears that Islamic involvement in the attacks would be seen as revenge for Aznar's support of the Iraq war in the face of vehement opposition at home.

Aznar did not back down when he was grilled repeatedly as to why officials of his Popular Party did not publicly rule out ETA involvement before the March 14 elections on the basis of evidence pointing to Islamic involvement.

## Report links Sept. 11, train attacks

MADRID, Spain — An unidentified Muslim militant suspected of helping plan the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States also offered this year's Madrid train bombings, a Spanish newspaper said Sunday, asserting the closest link yet between the two terrorist attacks.

The man is believed to be a lieutenant of Mustafa Setmariam, a fugitive with dual Syrian and Spanish nationality who is considered a key figure in the March 11 backpack bombings that targeted the Madrid commuter rail network, the newspaper ABC said, citing information from the FBI.

Last week, the United States announced a \$5 million reward for information leading to Osama bin Laden's arrest.

The Madrid attack killed 191 people and was claimed in videotapes by militants saying they acted on behalf of al-Qaida in revenge for Spain's sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan.

From The Associated Press

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## Swiss voters OK stem cell research

BY A.G. HIGGINS  
The Associated Press

GENEVA — Swiss voters overwhelmingly approved a law allowing stem cell research Sunday, rejecting a hard-line campaign that compared researchers to the Nazi "angel of death," Dr. Josef Mengele.

Some 66.4 percent of those polled — or 1.1 million voters — approved the law passed by the government last December. The law will take effect in March.

Opponents had called the referendum to try to overturn the legislation, even though it sets stricter limitations on research than exist elsewhere in Europe. The Swiss will allow the use only of embryonic stem cells left over from in-vitro fertilization.

The government said the law will permit Switzerland — which has major pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies — to take part in vital research.

The government said the law strictly prohibits human cloning or the creation of embryos for stem cell research and stressed the restrictions on the research, which include a requirement for the written consent of the parents and the approval of an ethics committee and the Swiss Health Ministry for each research project.

European nations that permit stem cell research include Sweden, Finland, Greece and the Netherlands. Britain allows the creation of human embryos for stem cell procurement.



Workers clean up scattered dishes in the kitchen of their restaurant Monday after a powerful earthquake in Kushi, Japan. The earthquake, with a preliminary magnitude of 7.1, struck Japan's northern island of Hokkaido early Monday, swaying buildings, throwing objects off shelves and triggering a small tsunami wave that reached shore.

## Temblor rattles northern Japan

### 24 injured by 7.1 magnitude quake

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN  
Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — Residents here shuffled into work a bit groggy Monday after many were jolted awake by an early-morning earthquake that injured 24 on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido and triggered a tidal wave warning.

The magnitude-7.1 earthquake struck at 3:32 a.m. beneath the sea off Hokkaido's eastern coast and was felt as far south as Yokohama, near Tokyo, according to local news reports.

The temblor measured an intensity of 3 in Amori Prefecture, to include Misawa, officials with Amori Meteorological Observatory said.

No injuries or damage were reported on Misawa Air Base or in Misawa city, both city and military officials reported Monday.

The quake was one of the strongest felt at Misawa in over a year: On Sept. 25, 2003, an 8.3-magnitude tremor off the eastern coast of Hokkaido rocked northern Japan, injuring more than 700 and killing at least one person.

For some tower residents at Misawa, Monday morning's earthquake felt like "a sideways roller coaster," said 1st Lt. Dan Schwendeman, deputy chief of manpower for 35th Fighter Wing who lives on the sixth floor of a north area tower.

"Once it starts rocking, it really rocks up there," Schwendeman said.

The temblor woke up his family — and his fish. "It was swaying

so much, it knocked the water out of my fish tank," Schwendeman said.

At least seven aftershocks occurred after the first tremor, according to Kyodo News. About 13,000 households on Hokkaido were advised to temporarily evacuate. The injured included an 80-year-old woman who fell and broke her arm and a 1.5-year-old boy who was hit by falling objects, reported Kyodo News on Monday.

No tidal waves occurred, according to Amori Meteorological Observatory.

As of late Monday, 24 people had reported injuries, almost all minor, said Kimikazu Takahashi, Hokkaido prefectural government spokesman.

Several people, mostly elderly, had suffered minor injuries such as cuts from falling objects or broken glass, Hokkaido prefectural police spokesman Tsunao Sasaki said.

In Kushiro, a 57-year-old woman suffered a foot injury after stepping on broken glass, police said.

More than 1,500 homes in Hokkaido briefly lost power, said Hokkaido Electric Power Co. spokesman Junichiro Kato. Natural gas services to many homes were also cut but were quickly restored.

Railway services on several lines in Hokkaido were suspended for a short time, according to NHK.

Chiyomi Sumida and The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Staff writer Jennifer H. Svan at: [svan@stripes.osd.mil](mailto:svan@stripes.osd.mil)

## Pakistan tests nuclear-capable missile

BY MUNIR AHMAD  
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Pakistan successfully test-fired a new version of its short-range, nuclear-capable missile Monday, officials said, in the latest round of tit-for-tat launches with neighboring India despite recent peace overtures.

Army spokesman Maj. Gen. Shahkhat Sultan insisted the test of the Ghazani missile will have no negative impact on the peace process with Pakistan's rival, India, which had no immediate comment on the launch.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Masood Khan told reporters that foreign secretaries of both countries will meet in Islamabad on Dec. 23-24 to discuss all issues, including the disputed region of Kashmir, a constant source of irritation in bilateral relations.

The military said Pakistan's neighbors, including India, were notified of the test in advance. India and Pakistan routinely test missiles.

"We have test-fired this missile to check its latest design," Sultan told The Associated Press.

President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shahkhat Aziz congratulated scientists for giving Pakistan the missile and "making its defense impregnable," an

other military official said on the condition of anonymity.

He said more such tests will be carried out in the coming days. Prime Minister Sheikh Aziz claimed that instead of heightening tension in the region, the tests provide Pakistan with a credible deterrent to all-out war.

"This strategic capability is the anchor of peace and assurance of our stability and security," Aziz said.

The military issued a statement saying the Ghazani has already been added to the army's "strategic command," and that "Pakistan's nuclear and missile program will maintain the pace of development, and tests will continue to be conducted as per technical needs."

It was the third test of the Ghazani, which reportedly has a range of 180 miles. India has said technology for the missile was given to Islamabad by China or North Korea in the 1990s.

Just six weeks ago, Pakistan tested its Ghaury V missile, which has a range of 930 miles, making it capable of hitting many Indian cities. Officials at that time said the test was not intended as a message to New Delhi.

India on Friday test-fired a surface-to-air short-range missile on the coast of eastern Orissa state.

### Russia tests ABM

MOSCOW — Russia on Monday successfully tested a modernized anti-ballistic missile system, the military said, in what an analyst called a sign that the country was trying to answer the United States' withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

The test-firing of the missile, which can intercept and destroy other missiles, was aimed at certifying it for further use, said a Space Troops spokesman who declined to give his name.

He said the missile's technical performance was flawless during the launch that took place at 11 a.m. Moscow time at the Saray-Shagan testing range in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan.

The Interfax news agency said Monday that the missile was an A-135, which the Russian military has been armed with since the early 1950s.

From wire reports

### Mouse caught robbing register

VILLACH, Austria — Someone was stealing cash from a shop, but thanks to a videocamera, authorities got their man — and it was a mouse.

A security camera set up inside the shop in Villach in the southwestern Austrian province of Carinthia helped the owner figure out who was making off with bank notes from the cash register. It turned out to be a mouse looking for nesting material, officials said Monday.

### Myanmar activist detention extended

YANGON, Myanmar — Detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been told she will remain under house arrest from the cash register. It turned out to be a mouse looking for nesting material, officials said Monday.

NLD spokesman and party secretary U Lwin did not give further details of the order or how he learned of it. Suu Kyi's telephone has been disconnected, and party leaders have not been allowed to visit her since May.

### Hopes dim for 141 missing miners

BEIJING — Hopes were dim Monday for 141 coal miners missing since the explosion at China's mine as toxic fumes delayed rescuers trying to enter the pit more than a day after the disaster.

Some 25 miners were already confirmed dead in Sunday's blast in the Chongjiao Coal Mine in Shaanxi. If none of the missing survivors, it would be one of the deadliest disasters in a decade to hit China's accident-prone mining industry.

From wire reports

# Fort Benning gears up for more troops

By ELLIOTT MINOR  
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ga. — With Fort Benning preparing for its largest troop expansion since the Vietnam War, barber Anthony Brock figures he'll be giving a lot more GI haircuts, or at least he'll have a steady stream of customers even when major units deploy for combat.

Nearly 6,000 new soldiers are set to move to the western Georgia Army post, which is already a major training center for recruits, airborne troops, infantry soldiers, officers and reservists preparing for combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Thousands more may come when the United States starts closing European bases and brings home 60,000 soldiers and families, officials say.

Fort Benning is already home to the 4,000-member 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division, which helped lead the charge into Iraq in 2003 and will return to the war zone in a couple of months.

Now the fort is slated to get a new group of 3,800 light-infantry soldiers who will be members of the 5th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. Another 1,600 soldiers will be added to handle the post's additional training responsibilities and to expand existing units.

Joining the new soldiers will be an estimated 3,686 spouses and 6,634 children. Many of the families will live off-post.

Builders already are responding with new apartment and condo projects, and three more schools may be built to accommodate an estimated 5,000 new students, officials say.

Brock, who plays scissors at Ranger Joe's Barber Shop, hopes the new troops will cushion the impact of future deployments.

"When the 3rd Brigade left, it cut my paycheck in half," Brock said.

"You won't feel the effect ... as bad with more people here."

The influx of about 16,000 new residents over the next few years will create at least 7,000 additional jobs and make a tremendous economic impact on surrounding

counties in Alabama and Georgia, said Mike Gaymon, president and CEO of the Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce. "This is the equivalent of three or four Toyota plants," he said.

The impact is gigantic. Fort Benning already has an annual \$1.9 billion impact on the area and that could climb to an estimated \$2.5 billion by 2006, the chamber has said.

"We are jumping up for joy," said Bill Heard II, president of Bill Heard Chevrolet, which sells about 40 percent of the cars at its Columbus dealership to soldiers.

During the Vietnam War, Fort Benning's soldier population increased from 25,000 to 45,000 with the addition of a division.

The latest expansion will increase the number of soldiers there to 20,000, not counting the growing number of cars who come temporarily for training.

Fort Benning is expected to train 80,000 soldiers next year, 10,000 more than this year.

Fort Benning's growth is the result of the transformation of the Army into smaller, more rapidly deployable units.



Barber Anthony Brock trims the hair of 2nd Lt. James Barclay, 22, of Scottsboro, Ala., on Wednesday near Fort Benning, Ga., which is preparing for its largest troop expansion since the Vietnam War.

## Iraq war forces basic training to take a grueling turn

By FAYE FIORE  
Los Angeles Times

FT. BENNING, Ga. — The soldiers from Echo Company sit in a noisy chow hall, tired but on the brink of a milestone. In two days, they will complete basic training as going in as the Army has ever dishied out. And in a matter of weeks, many of them will be on the ground in Iraq.

"My wife said, 'Don't join the infantry,' and I promised her 'I wouldn't,'" said Army Spc. Jonathan Hernandez, 29, a former history teacher from Niceville, Fla. "Now I realize it doesn't matter. The enemy doesn't care if they are firing at a financial specialist or somebody in the infantry."

Today's casualty lists are riddled with cooks, mechanics, mail clerks — all theoretically noncombat jobs. But yesterday's boot camp did not prepare soldiers for the cities and deserts of Afghanistan and Iraq, where the theater of battle is all around.

As a result, combat training is undergoing its most dramatic overhaul since Vietnam. And as the war in Iraq forces America's military to change, the storied rigors of boot camp have become ever more rigorous.

"Whenever you go into a combat environment, there are going to be challenges you didn't foresee," said Col. William J. Gallagher, commander of the Basic Combat Training Brigade at Ft. Benning.

But as a downsized, under-supplied force strains to fight a stubborn insurgency, there will have the luxury of time. The Army finds itself with much more to teach its combat-bound recruits, and the same 63 basic training days to teach.

Today's new soldier averages five hours of sleep a night instead of seven. The day still begins at dawn and lasts past dinner, but core training pushes further into the night, eating into time once used for review and reinforcement of the day's lessons. Sundays, once set aside for worship, laundry and phone calls, are no longer guaranteed "free" time.

The March 2003 ambush of the 507th Maintenance Company from Ft. Bliss, Texas, was a wake-up call for American armed forces. Eleven combat-support sol-



Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion 54th Infantry Regiment wait for their scores after a live-fire qualifying exercise, when they earn the "coveys" for their Kevlar helmets, a basic training rite of passage.

diers were killed and six more captured — including Pvt. Jessica Lynch — lending urgency to the need to train every volunteer as a warrior.

After the 507th ambush, a task force spent a year brainstorming ways to avoid another such catastrophe. The members came up with a set of new tasks and battle drills considered essential for survival, and suggested adding an extra three weeks of training to teach them. But each day of added training meant a decline in the number of soldiers available for combat. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker ordered the command to find a way to fit the new curriculum into the existing nine weeks.

Instructors prioritized. The traditional marching competition was dropped, and protocol lessons were shortened. Standard courses were made more relevant to to-

day's war. Basic radio communications now includes ways the enemy uses cell-phones to detonate bombs.

Gallagher believes instructors have struck a balance, maximizing every available moment without stressing soldiers to a point of diminished returns.

For the recruits, it wasn't exactly what they expected. The plan for many had been to learn an Army trade, to make an important contribution and still keep a safe distance from enemy lines. Instead, before they knew it, they were learning to avoid landmines, survive an ambush and spot roadside bombs disguised as cans of Coke.

Many of the thousands of new recruits who file into Ft. Benning every year are as young as 17 or as old as 35. Some of them are still fighting acne, others middle-aged paunches. But they all are presented with

the same stark odds: Half will deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan as soon as 30 days after completing initial training. The rest can expect to go sometime during their first enlistment.

The infantry soldiers — those who specialize in combat — complete their course in 14 weeks. The combat-support troops train for nine weeks before learning a specific job. But under the Army's new philosophy, they all must be warriors first.

The new training has been more than many soldiers expected, but not more than they could manage. Sitting in the chow hall over trays of today's Army fare several Echo Company soldiers talked about the likelihood of going to Iraq. Some were eager to take their skills to war, others resigned to the fact they might have to. But all said they felt prepared.

Derek Gonzales, 18, who graduated in June from Tipton High School in Missouri, grew up in the little town of Syracuse, and joined the Army in part because his father thought it would be good for him. Gonzales didn't figure on actually landing in Iraq when he enlisted, but he is resigned to the possibility.

"I'll do this because it's my duty that I have to serve the country and everything, but" he stopped without finishing the thought.

The cars began to file through the gate at 8 a.m. for Family Day, a pregraduation ritual held to hand out awards of excellence and give soldiers their first free day in weeks.

Parents and spouses mingled outside, waiting for Echo Company to arrive. The Army has made it clear that these new soldiers will go to Iraq and fight this war. But the message does not seem to have been registered beyond the boundaries of the base.

The chant of cadence rose in the distance, growing to a thunder as the new soldiers marched in. The slumped posture and undisciplined gaits of nine weeks ago had yielded to straight backs and eyes front.

They donned their black berets for the first time, then fell out, into the arms of weary mothers and anxious wives.

# Jordan sibling wants full Iraq deployment

The Associated Press

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. — Army Command Sgt. Maj. James R. Jordan has much in common with his younger brother, retired basketball star Michael Jordan. He loves his job, believes in helping his team and expects maximum effort from those around him.

And like his brother, James Jordan likes to leave on his own terms. He has asked to stay in the Army for

a year beyond his mandatory retirement date so he can complete a full year-long deployment to Iraq with about 500 other members of the 35th Signal Brigade.

"We are currently at war," Jordan said before the unit started shipping out Sunday. "We are doing things, and it requires leaders to do certain things. That's what I am, a leader."

Under normal conditions, the 47-year-old Jordan would wind down his Army career in the spring as he approached the 30-year mark, but he has no intention of getting on an airplane

April 29 and coming home.

"That's not the way you want to end a 30-year career," Jordan told The Fayetteville Observer.

"People ask 'Why?' " said Col. Bryan Ellis, the brigade commander. "The answer is, he is completely selfless. We all want to see it go well."

Jordan is a no-nonsense non-commissioned officer with a shaved head and a wry sense of humor. He stands 5-foot-7, while

his younger brother is about 6-foot-6.

As the senior enlisted soldier in the brigade of 2,450 soldiers, he

has kept a low profile at Fort Bragg and avoided calling attention to his family connection.

"If you don't believe in selfless service, you are not going to make it in this business," said Jordan, the oldest person in the brigade.

He was 36, wearing the stripes of a first sergeant, when he went to airborne school, where most soldiers are in their teens or early 20s. He still runs eight



Command Sgt. Maj. James R. Jordan, older brother of retired basketball star Michael Jordan, speaks Monday at Fort Bragg, N.C., about the 35th Signal Brigade's imminent deployment to Iraq.

miles and expects soldiers to be alongside him.

Three years of Junior ROTC during high school in Wilmington, N.C., helped convince Jordan that the Army was for him.

"I figured I wanted to be a soldier, plus I was the oldest of five kids," he said. "I wanted to get

out of the house and do something myself."

He said some of his relatives don't really know what he does.

"They know I'm in the Army. That's about it," he said. "My immediate family and my wife, my kids, not extremely happy, but they are on the team. They say:

"Daddy, do what you've got to do."

"I've been doing this by myself for so long, being my own person, being my own soldier," he said. "I'm going to continue doing it the same way until the day I feel like I need to hang it up, not when they feel like I need to hang it up."



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## IN THE STATES

## High court won't hear gay marriage case

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday stepped a dispute over gay marriages, rejecting a challenge to the nation's only law sanctioning such unions.

Justices had been asked by conservative groups to overturn the year-old decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Court legalizing gay marriage. They declined, without comment.

In the past year, at least 3,000 gay Massachusetts couples have wed, although voters may have a chance in 2006 to change the state constitution to permit civil union benefits for same-sex couples, but not the institution of marriage.

Critics of the November 2003 ruling by the highest court in Massachusetts argued that it violated the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of a republican form of government in each state. They lost at the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston.

Their attorney, Matthew Staver, said in a Supreme Court filing that the Constitution should "protect the citizens of Massachusetts from their own state supreme court's usurpation of power."

Federal courts, he said, should defend people's right "to live in a republican form of government free from tyrannical, whether that comes at the barrel of a gun or by the device of a court."

Merita Hopkins, a city attorney in Boston, had told justices in court papers that the people who filed the suit have not shown they suffered an injury and could not bring a challenge to the Supreme Court. "Deeply felt interest in the outcome of a case does not constitute an actual injury," she said.

Massachusetts Attorney General Tom Reilly told justices that voters can overturn the Supreme Judicial Court by adopting a constitutional amendment.

The lawsuit was filed by the Florida-based Liberty Counsel, a conservative law group, on behalf of Robert Langes, the vice president of the Catholic Action League of Massachusetts, and 11 state lawmakers.

"I think this decision underscores the need for Supreme Court justices who will restrain the activist impulses of ideologues on the bench," said C.J. Doyle, executive director of the Catholic Action League. "This was one skirmish, one battle in a much larger issue."

The Liberty Counsel had persuaded the Supreme Court in October to consider another high-profile issue, the constitutionality of Ten Commandments displays on government property. The court agreed to look at that church-state issue before Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist was diagnosed with thyroid cancer.

He is working from home while receiving chemotherapy and radiation and will miss court sessions for the next two weeks.

State legislators will decide whether to put the issue before Massachusetts voters in November 2006. Voters in 11 states approved constitutional amendments banning gay marriage in November elections. President Bush has promised to make a federal anti-gay marriage amendment a priority of his second term.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court narrowly ruled that gays and lesbians had a right under the state constitution to wed.

The nation's high court had stayed out of the Massachusetts fight on a previous occasion. Last May, justices refused to intervene and block clerks from issuing the first marriage licenses.

Gary Busack, legal director of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, which brought the case that led to legalization of gay marriage in Massachusetts, said Monday's decision was expected.

"This was a longshot taken by our opponents in the waning hours (before) the actual legal performing of marriages of gay couples on May 17," he said.

## Medical marijuana users seek exemption to federal ban

BY GINA HOLLAND

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court appeared hesitant Monday to endorse medical marijuana for patients who have a doctor's recommendation.

Justices are considering whether or not to allow people in 11 states with medical marijuana laws can get around a federal ban on pot.

Paul Clement, the Bush administration's top court lawyer, noted that California allows people with chronic physical and mental health problems to smoke pot and said that potentially many people are subjecting themselves to health dangers.

"Smoked marijuana really doesn't have any future in medicine," he said.

Justice Stephen Breyer said supporters of marijuana for the ill should take their fight to federal drug regulators — before coming to the Supreme Court, and several justices repeatedly referred to America's drug addiction problems. Dozens of people, some with blankets, camped outside the high court to hear justices debate the issue. Groups such as the Drug Free America Foundation fear a government loss will undermine campaigns against addictive drugs.

The high court heard arguments in the case of Angel Raich, who tried dozens of prescription medicines to ease the pain of a brain tumor and other illnesses before she turned to pot.

Supporters of Raich and another

ill woman who filed a lawsuit after her California home was raided by federal agents argue that people with the AIDS virus, cancer and other diseases should be able to grow and use marijuana.

Their attorney, Randy Barnett of Boston, told justices that his clients are law-abiding citizens who need marijuana to survive.

Marijuana may have some side effects, he said, but seriously sick people are willing to take the chance.

Besides California, nine other states allow people to use marijuana if their doctors agree: Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont and Washington. Arizona also has a law permitting marijuana prescriptions, but no active program.

The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled against the government in a divided opinion that found federal prosecution of medical marijuana users is unconstitutional if the marijuana is not sold, transported across state lines or used for non-medical purposes.

Lawyers for Raich and Diane Monson contend the government has no justification for pursuing ill small-scale users. Raich, an Oakland, Calif., mother of two teenagers, has scoliosis, a brain tumor, chronic nausea and other illnesses. Monson, a 47-year-old accountant who lives near Orville, Calif., has degenerative spine disease and grows her own marijuana plants in her backyard.

The Bush administration ar-

gues that Congress has found no accepted medical use of marijuana and needs to be able to eradicate drug trafficking and its social harms.

The Supreme Court ruled three years ago that the government could prosecute distributors of medical marijuana despite their claim that the activity was protected by "medical necessity."

Dozens of groups have weighed in on the latest case, which deals with users and is much more sweeping.

Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, conservative states that do not have medical marijuana laws, sided with the marijuana users on grounds that the federal government was trying to butt into state business of providing "for the health, safety, welfare and morals of their citizens."

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## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Japanese yen (Nov. 29)	101.00
South Korean won (Nov. 27)	1,626.00
Euro (Nov. 29)	\$1.3602
British pound (Nov. 29)	\$1.94

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3768
British pound	\$1.8951
Canada (Dollar)	1.7168
Denmark (Krone)	5.6162
Egypt (Pound)	2.215
Euro	\$1.329
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7123
Hungary (Forint)	167.13
Iceland (Krona)	65.225
Israel (Shekel)	4.3783
Japan (Yen)	102.56
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2947
Norway (Krone)	6.1306
Philippines (Peso)	56.15
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.75
Singapore (Dollar)	1.6382
South Korea (Won)	1,600.00
Switzerland (Franc)	1.1362
Thailand (Baht)	35.84
Turkey (Lira)	1,428,571.00

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

## PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc close	
Gold	\$449.30
Silver	\$7.612

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.00
Discount rate	3.00
Federal funds market rate	2.00
3-month bill	2.20
30-year bond	4.80

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America

## Kellogg CEO in line for commerce post

BY DEB RIECHMANN  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Monday chose Carlos Gutierrez, a native of Cuba who rose from truck driver to chief executive officer of Kellogg Co., to be secretary of commerce.

If confirmed by the Senate, Gutierrez would succeed Commerce Secretary Donald Evans, a Texas confidant of Bush, who announced his resignation shortly

after the Nov. 2 election.

The president called the 51-year-old Gutierrez a "great American success story" and a visionary executive, who understands the world of business."

"Carlos's family came to America from Cuba when he was a boy," Bush said in the Roosevelt Room. "He learned English from a bellhop in a Miami hotel and later became an American citizen. When his family eventually settled in Mexico City, Carlos

took his first job for Kellogg as a truck driver, delivering Frosted Flakes to local stores."

Gutierrez, who was joined by his wife, son and two daughters, is the first new member of Bush's economics team for his second term.

Bush's chief economics adviser, Stephen Friedman, said last

Gutierrez

week he is leaving. Other changes also are anticipated, although Treasury Secretary John Snow would like to stay.

"The secretary serves his service to the president as an honor and a privilege," Rob Nichols, a Treasury Department spokesman, said of Snow. "Like all his Cabinet colleagues, he serves at the pleasure of the president."

Looking ahead to his second term, Bush is already making changes to his current economics

team. And, private economists say it is possible that could include a change at the Treasury post. In early February, Snow, 65, a former chief at railroad giant CSX, replaced Paul O'Neill, who was fired by Bush as part of a shake-up of the president's economic team.

The White House said Bush appreciates the job Snow is doing but refused to say who would remain in his job. "I'm not going to get into talking about individual members of the Cabinet," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said.

Gutierrez, whose family fled Cuba in 1960 when he was 6, joined Kellogg in 1975. Known for having a strong work ethic and a seemingly endless stream of ideas, he worked all over the world for the company before being promoted to president and chief operating officer in June 1998.

Gutierrez, Kellogg's CEO since April 1999, is credited with shaping a major corporate and marketing overhaul at Kellogg, revamping the company's primary focus to cereal and wholesome snacks and reducing the company's debt.

Cents and Sensibility  
Money tip of the day

## 'Bots' make e-tail easy

Knight Ridder/Tribune

Shopping robots, or "bots," offer a convenient method of comparing prices on products and finding deals online. But not all bots are alike.

If you'd like to do some serious cyberspace shopping during the holiday season or simply a bit of Web-site window browsing, try one of the following sites:

[www.botspot.com](http://www.botspot.com) Gateway to all types of bots, including shop-

pings bots.

[www.mysystem.com](http://www.mysystem.com) Browse "Top Products" or goods in more than 20 shopping departments.

[www.pricegrabber.com](http://www.pricegrabber.com) Contains product price comparisons in variety of categories.

[www.pricecscan.com](http://www.pricecscan.com) Search for a low price on an item or for a specific retailer.

[www.roboshopper.com](http://www.roboshopper.com) Features price comparison on products ranging from electronic goods to pet care.

## Peterson sentencing likely to face appeals

SAN FRANCISCO — The jury that convicted Scott Peterson of murder reconvenes this week to decide whether he should be executed, but the decision may not be final for years given his numerous options for appeal.

Appeals are expected to focus on the performance of Peterson's high-profile Los Angeles attorney, Mark Geragos, legal experts said.

"An appellate attorney would argue that Geragos was incompetent," said Pete Kossoris, a retired Ventura County death penalty prosecutor. "One of the things he can be criticized for was his promise of certain evidence in his opening statement, and he never offered it."

After a five-month trial that became a national sensation, Peterson was convicted Nov. 12 of first-degree murder in the death of his wife, Laci, and second-degree murder in the death of the fetus she carried. Arguments begin Tuesday in the trial's penalty phase, in which the same jury will decide whether he should get the death penalty or life in prison without parole.

## Jury selection begins for deadly smuggling trial

HOUSTON — Defendants in the first trial stemming from the nation's deadliest human smuggling attempt include the son of a South Texas couple accused of running one of the operation's cells.

Jury selection was set to begin Monday afternoon in federal court. Victor Jesus Rodriguez, Claudia Carreras de Villa and Freddy Giovanni Garcia-Tobar each face a total of 58 counts of harboring and transporting illegal immigrants. If convicted, each could get up to life in prison.

Prosecutors say the three were part of a smuggling ring that tried to transport a group of more than 70 immigrants inside a tractor trailer during a trip from South Texas to Houston that began on the evening of May 13, 2003. Packed inside the trailer, which had little ventilation, the immigrants began succumbing to stifling temperatures that authorities estimate reached 173 degrees.

Early the next morning, the trailer was abandoned at a truck stop near Victoria, about 100 miles southwest of Houston. Authorities found 17 immigrants dead inside the trailer. Two others later died.

## Actor John Barrymore, father of Drew, dead

LOS ANGELES — Actor John D. Barrymore, the father of Drew Barrymore, died Monday, the actress said. He was 72.

"He was a cool cat. Please smile when you think of him," Drew Barrymore said in a statement issued by her publicist.

No information was released about the cause of death or where in Los Angeles he died.

John D. Barrymore was part of an acting dynasty that included his father, John Barrymore, and his father's siblings, Lionel Barrymore and Ethel Barrymore.

John D. Barrymore was born in Beverly Hills on June 4, 1932. His mother was actress Dolores Costello.

From The Associated Press

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# NBC exec survives jet crash

## Two killed; Dick Ebersol's younger son presumed dead

BY JOHN MARSHALL  
The Associated Press

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — NBC Sports chairman Dick Ebersol and his college-age son emerged from the wreckage of a chartered jet after the plane crashed, but authorities said Monday his 14-year-old son was presumed dead in the wreckage.

The 18-seat aircraft with six people on board crashed Sunday morning at Montrose Regional Airport in southwest Colorado, not far from the Telluride Ski Area. Two crew members were also killed.

The plane slid sideways into a road and the impact ripped the cockpit from the fuselage, and Ebersol's older son Charles helped his 57-year-old father through the gap, a witness said.

Matt Elits, Montrose County chief deputy coroner, said Monday that a "complete and thorough search" revealed no sign of the second son on the plane. Edward, anywhere around the crash site.

"We believe at this time that the boy has probably perished in the crash," Elits said. He said the search in the wreckage would get under way when federal crash investigators arrived later Monday.

A heavy snowstorm had eased up before the plane prepared to take off for South Bend, Ind., where Charles Ebersol is a senior at the University of Notre Dame. There was no immediate word if the weather was a factor in the crash.

The pilot and a flight attendant were killed, said Michael O'Connor, regional duty officer with the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington state. The co-pilot was hospitalized in Denver, while Dick and Charles Ebersol were hospitalized in Grand Junction, witnesses said.

Ebersol's wife of 23 years, "Kate and Allan" and "McMillan and Wife" star Susan Saint James, was not on the plane. The family lives in Connecticut.

Kevin Sullivan, NBC University's vice president for sports communication, told the Rocky Mountain News late Sunday that Saint James would have "no comment at this time. She requested privacy, and she is at the hospital with Dick and Charles," Sullivan said. Neither NBC Sports nor St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction released any information on Dick and Charles Ebersol's conditions.

The co-pilot in Denver was in critical condition, authorities said Monday.

Eyewitness Chuck Distel told The Associated Press by phone that he was driving on a highway parallel to the runway when he saw the plane skid sideways through a fence and brush before hitting a road that ripped the cockpit from the fuselage. The Denver Post said the plane had lifted off briefly before crashing.

Distel said Charles helped his father throughout the front of the plane and that the pair were walking around when Distel and an airport official arrived. He said Ebersol didn't say a word but the younger man cried and yelled "Oh, my God! Oh, my God!"

"I had to think for a second, 'who are these people?'" he said. "They weren't severely injured, they were in shock." Distel said Charles was able to climb into an ambulance, while the elder Ebersol was loaded onto a stretcher.

The wreckage burst into flames, forcing Distel and other rescuers to get away.

A weekend storm that covered most of the state dumped more than 3 feet (1 meter) of snow in the Montrose area and Distel said there was light snow and fog at the time of the crash. Investigators from the FAA and National Safety Transportation Board were en route to the airport, 298 kilometers (185 miles) southwest of Denver.



An airplane carrying NBC Sports chairman Dick Ebersol burns after crashing on takeoff at Montrose Regional Airport on Sunday morning, in Montrose, Colo. One of Ebersol's sons, Charles, survived but another son, Teddy, is presumed dead, KUSA reported.

The Montrose airport is one of several that serves Telluride, a popular ski destination for celebrities.

The plane was identified as a CL-602 Challenger, which could hold up to 19 passengers, registered to Jet Alliance of Millville, New Jersey. The company offered its condolences but said it had no additional information.

Known as a television innova-

tor, Ebersol has a long history at NBC.

He became the network's director of late-night programming in 1974 and replaced Lorne Michaels for a rocky tenure as executive producer of "Saturday Night Live" in the early 1980s. Ebersol, of Litchfield, Connecticut, became president of NBC Sports in 1989 and recently signed a contract that keeps him at the network through 2012.

# Winter storms pound Colo., central states

BY ROBERT WELLER  
The Associated Press

DENVER — A snowstorm that pounded the Sierra Nevada and buried the central Rockies during the weekend delivered a snowy, icy mess across the central part of the nation Monday, closing schools and making highways slick.

More than 100 schools in Nebraska were closed or opened late.

Stranded motorists had to find places to stay for the night in some areas of the state after icy, snow-covered pavement prompted shut downs of sections of Interstate 80 for several hours Sunday.

"We were on a total sheet of ice," Jennifer Priest, manager of a motel in North Platte, Neb., said of her drive to work Sunday that included a slide into a median. Her motel and others in town were jammed.

Snow was up to a foot deep Monday in western Nebraska.

Sections of I-70 in Kansas also were icy and snowpacked Monday and traffic was moving cautiously.

"It's still snowing and blowing a little, and it's just a mess," said Tina Schultz, an employee at Mittie Truck Stop in Oakley, Kan.

A section of Interstate 25 southwest of Santa Fe, N.M., was shut down at dawn Monday because of an accident on ice, said S.U. Ma-

hesh, state Department of Transportation spokesman. Later in the morning, I-40 was closed just east of Albuquerque because of snow, he said.

The storm continued producing mostly light snow Monday from New Mexico across the central Plains to the Great Lakes.

Since late last week, the weather had been blamed for at least five traffic deaths in Nebraska, three in New Mexico and two in central California.

The system dumped nearly 3 feet of snow on parts of Colorado early Sunday before hitting the heavily populated Front Range with bitter cold, blustery wind and about a half-foot of snow.

Traffic was stop-and-go from the Eisenhower Tunnel back to Denver — a distance of about 75 miles — as thousands of people returned from Thanksgiving holiday. Powder blanketed the field during the Denver Broncos game Sunday night against the Oakland Raiders. In southwest Colorado, a small jet crashed Sunday at the Montrose airport, killing at least two people. NBC Sports President Dick Ebersol and one of his sons walked out of the wreckage but another son was missing. It was not immediately clear if snow was a factor.

Fifteen inches of snow fell in Wyoming during the weekend and hundreds of traffic accidents were reported.

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# Historian, philosopher share \$1M Kluge prize

BY CARL HARTMAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An 80-year-old American historian, Jaroslav Pelikan, and a 91-year-old French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, will share the \$1 million Kluge prize, created by a Virginia philanthropist last year to honor achievement in fields not covered by the Nobel prizes.

Pelikan, who lives in New Haven, Conn., has specialized in the story of Christianity from its beginnings to the present. He has written more than 30 books, using sources in nine languages and dealing with literary and musical as well as doctrinal aspects of religion. He is a former president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Pelikan "has moved over time to consider the whole history of church doctrine, both through the western Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church," said James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress.

Ricoeur has taught at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, Columbia and Yale universities, the University of Chicago and Louvain University in Belgium, as well as at the Sorbonne and other French institutions.

Orphaned in World War I, Ricoeur was drafted in World War II and was captured and spent most of the conflict as a prisoner of war in Germany. He was active in the French Socialist Party afterward.

Billington, announcing the award he will present on Dec. 8, described Ricoeur's work as drawing "on the entire tradition of western philosophy to explore and explain common problems: What is a self? How is memory used and abused? What is the nature of responsibility?"

The prize was established by John W. Kluge, chairman of the private sector advisory board of the Library of Congress. The first year's prize, for 2003, went to Leszek Kolakowski, a Polish anti-communist philosopher.

# 7 die in Texas copter crash

## Black Hawk chopper from Fort Hood hit tower support wires

BY NATALIE GOTT

The Associated Press

BRUCEVILLE-EDDY, Texas — An Army helicopter crashed and burned Monday after hitting a television-tower wire in the fog, killing all seven soldiers aboard, military officials said.

Warning lights on the tower were not working, a TV station official said.

The UH-60 Black Hawk, bound for the Red River Army Depot in Texarkana with seven soldiers from Fort Hood, went down in a field about 30 miles northeast of Fort Hood.

The fog was so thick when emergency crews arrived that they could not see more than halfway up the tower, authorities said.

Everyone aboard was killed, said Lt. Col. Jonathan Withington, spokesman for the 4th Infantry Division, based at Fort Hood. Their names were not immediately released.

Rock Eicke, who lives about a quarter-mile from the crash site, said he was getting ready for work about 7 a.m. when he was startled by a loud sound. He looked out his window and saw the helicopter hit the ground.

"All of the sudden I just saw a big ball of fire erupt from the ground and then boom, an explosion," said Eicke. "It was burning to the point that we couldn't have done anything."

The main part of the fuselage went down in a field

about 200 to 300 yards from the tower, said McClennan County constable Ken Brown.

He said he saw the tail section, parts of the rotor and other helicopter parts between the tower and the field.

Base spokesman Dan Hassett did not know what kind of mission the helicopter was on, but said the soldiers were attached to the 4th Infantry Division.

"Our hearts and condolences go out to the family and friends of these soldiers and we're going to do all we can to support the families in their time of grief," Withington said.

The helicopter hit a wire that stabilizes an 1,800-foot television broadcasting tower, said Jerry Pursley, general manager of Waco-Temple-Killeen television station KXXV, which owns the tower.

The tower itself was not hit, he said. He said the station notified the Federal Aviation Administration. The agency's spokesman in Texas did not respond to a call seeking comment.

The Black Hawk, which the military began using in 1979, is the Army's main troop transport helicopter.

It can carry 15 people and usually is flown by a crew of four.

In November 2003, 17 soldiers were killed when two Black Hawk helicopters crashed in Iraq, apparently as the result of enemy fire.

At the time it was the deadliest single event for U.S. troops in Iraq.



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8:00 U.S. Movie (2002): Enough (1:57)  
10:00 Chinese Movie (2002): Together (2:00)  
12:40 UEFA Euro 2004 Soccer: Portugal vs. Greece  
4:40 U.S.-British Movie (2002): The Four Feathers (2:17)

**MTV**

**Morning**  
6:00 Wake Up  
7:00 M Size Tuesday  
8:00 Think Loud 2004 World AIDS Day Special  
**Evening**  
6:00 M Size Wednesday  
7:00 Think Loud 2004 World AIDS Day Special  
1:00 M Size Wednesday  
2:00 Think Loud 2004 World AIDS Day Special

**Morning**



## FACES

### Roberts gives birth to twins

It's a girl and a boy for actress **Julia Roberts** and her husband, cinematographer **Danny Moder**.

Roberts gave birth to twins **Haad Patricia Moder** and **Phinnaeus Walter Moder** on Sunday morning at a Southern California hospital, publicist **Marce Engelman** said Sunday.

Roberts, 37, was confined to bed last month after experiencing a series of early contractions and wasn't due until early January.

Engelman said Sunday in a phone interview that "mother and babies are doing great," but didn't release the twins' weights or other details.

Roberts, who skyrocketed to fame with "Pretty Woman" in 1990, has two films coming out in early December — **Mike Nichols'** "Closer" and "Ocean's Twelve," the **Steven Soderbergh**-directed sequel to 2001's star-studded heist caper.

Roberts married Moder in July 2002 at her home in Taos, N.M. The twins are the first children for Roberts, who won the best actress Oscar in 2001 for "Erin Brockovich."



Roberts

### Prison chow not a good thing

The food at the Federal Corrections Camp in Alderson, W.Va., apparently is nothing to write home about — unless one is eating it with **Martha Stewart**.

Roman Catholic nun **Carol Gilbert**, 57, who is serving time in the same prison with the famous housemaker, says she enjoys eating with Stewart, although the setting could be better.

"We're not talking about a tea party," Gilbert's attorney, **Sue Tyburski**, told **Denver's Rocky Mountain News** for a story in Saturday's editions. "We're talking about a big cafeteria setting with the terrible food."

Stewart

Gilbert is serving 33 months on convictions of obstructing the national defense and damaging government property for her role in an anti-war protest in 2002. Stewart was convicted on obstruction of justice in May and began serving her five-month sentence at the women's federal prison Oct. 8.

### Politician/rock star collapses at beach

Australian rock star-turned-lawmaker **Peter Garrett** was hospitalized after collapsing on a Sydney beach after a morning swim, authorities said.

Garrett, former lead singer of **Midnight Oil**, collapsed on Maroubra beach early Saturday. Lifeguards came to his aid when he collapsed as he waded from the water where he had been body surfing.

He was discharged from **Prince Wales Hospital** on Saturday evening, saying he would undergo further tests to determine why he had collapsed.

Garrett's political adviser **Simon Balderstone** said Garrett had no history of medical problems. "He's very fit and healthy, and it's probably fair to say he's a lot fitter and healthier than your average 51-year-old Australian male," he said.



Garrett

### Illinois Republicans get ribbing

Democratic Sen.-elect **Barack Obama** poked fun at the Illinois Republican Party when he appeared as a guest on the "Late Show with **David Letterman**."

Obama told Letterman on Friday night's show that after Republican challenger **Jack Ryan** dropped out of the race in June, the state GOP "couldn't find anyone out of the 12 million people in Illinois to run against me." Instead, Illinois Republicans picked **Alan Keyes**, a conservative political commentator from Maryland, to replace Ryan on the November ballot.

Obama won 70 percent of the vote on Nov. 2 compared to 27 percent for Keyes.



Obama



Members of the R&B group **New Edition**, from left, **Johnny Gill**, **Ricky Bell**, **Ralph Tresvant**, **Mike Binns** and **Ron DeVoe**, pose for a picture in September before the halftime show of the **New York Urban League Classic** football game between **Morgan State University** and **Hampton University** at **Giants Stadium** in **East Rutherford, N.J.**

## New Edition struggles with 'old school' comeback

BY NEKESA MUMBI MOODY

The Associated Press

Over the past two decades, **New Edition** has managed to overcome the kind of obstacles that have sent other groups hurtling into "Whatever Happened To..." territory.

They acted their transition from preteen bubblegum pop to adult R&B, survived the loss (and subsequent reappearance) of the dynamic **Bobby Brown**, endured lackluster sales and flourished despite divergent career paths and stretches of inactivity.

Yet their latest comeback attempt may prove the most difficult one yet.

On Nov. 9, **Ralph Tresvant**, **Johnny Gill**, **Mike Binns**, **Ricky Bell** and **Ronnie DeVoe** released "One Love," their eighth album, after an eight-year layoff. Although signed to **P. Diddy's** youth-oriented **Bad Boy** label, they've still got "old-school" stamped all over them. And that's part of the problem, especially in an R&B market dominated by young stars with a hip-hop bent.

Already they've struggled — the album's first single, "Hot 2Nite," peaked at just No. 35 on **Billboard's** Top 100 R&B and Hip-Hop chart.

The Boston-bred group — once again without **Bobby Brown** — is well aware of the challenges. Sitting together in a Washington hotel conference room after a planned concert was scrapped due to technical issues, the men nod their heads in agreement when talking about the ruthlessness of today's market.

"We've been in the business for 20 years or more but we haven't been on radio consistently year after year. The game changes," said **Bell**.

**Binns** is even more blunt: "They send you home early. I think this generation is a little more colder."

And **DeVoe** says a recent conversation with a young teen about her music favorites confirmed his worst fears.

"She said, 'Let me start with the people I don't like. **50 Cent** — he's played out.' How is **50 Cent** played out? He only had one record! [But] it's like that across the board," he lamented.

Still, **New Edition** has reason to be hopeful. Their last record, 1996's "Home Again," also came after an eight-year layoff — and sold more than two million copies.

And their recent tour showed they still have an audience: At this summer's **Essence Festival**, where acts such as **Prince** and **Mary J. Blige** were billed as the main draw, **New Edition** got one of the wildest receptions, as thirty-something women shrieked like teenagers and men in baggy jeans swayed to past hits such as "Can You Stand The Rain," "Mr. Telephone Man," and "Candy Girl."

"They have such a broad core audience," says producer **Jimmy Jam**, who along with partner **Terry Lewis** worked with the group on the new disc, which incorporates a bit of today's hip-hop sound along with the polished R&B grooves that **New Edition** fans have come to expect. "It really benefits them when they're coming out with a record that they have that fan base to draw upon."

"As far as their showmanship and the energy when they hit the screen and the stage... they're like, professional," says another "One Love" producer, **Stevie J**. "Kids are going to get a chance to hear some classic sounds from an older R&B group."

"They have to reinvent themselves," he said. "It's going to happen."

Not that **New Edition** is exactly ancient: They're all in their mid to late 30s. "The crazy part about it is they're not older than most of the people that are in the game right now, it's just that they started so young," says **P. Diddy**.

**New Edition** was the '80s answer to **The Jackson Five**. With hits such as "Popcorn Love," they endeavored themselves to R&B teenybopers and helped rejuvenate the teen music scene, spawning imitators such as fellow Boston natives **New Kids on the Block**. But unlike other teen groups, they managed to stick around past puberty, and even withstood personnel changes, including the loss of **Brown** in the late '80s (he briefly rejoined the group for 1996's "Home Again" album and tour) and the addition of **Gill** around the same time.

Although the **P. Diddy** connection has provided some pre-release hype, the group acknowledges the difficulties of capitalizing on it. **Binns** said the market is so saturated with rap it's hard for any R&B act to get attention.

"If you look at a [radio] playlist... out of the top 20 records they're playing, 15 of them are hip-hop. So there's no room for **R&B**, and it's not just us, it's everybody," he said.

But they still plan on getting on that list — even if it takes them a while to do it.

## Skydiving Santa nixed

**CA** ANAHEIM — Santa Claus can build toys, shimmy down a chimney and harness flying reindeer. But one thing he can't do any more is skydive near Disneyland.

An annual "Jingle Bell Jump," with Santa parachuting to the Anaheim Town Square shopping center with gifts and greetings, was canceled for a second year because of a federal law restricting use of area airspace.

Instead, Santa will float in a hot air balloon tethered to the ground.

Disney officials say the flight restrictions are needed to thwart terrorists who could target the park. Managers of the 50-store shopping center don't buy it.

## Textbook costs probed

**GA** ATLANTA — The state Board of Regents reviewed ways to curb the increasing costs of textbooks. Some students must pay hundreds of dollars for books that can make up 20 percent of the college costs, state financial officials said.

Textbook editions are updated about every four years, forcing many students to buy new books instead of cheaper used ones. "The cost has become prohibitive to an awful lot of people," Chancellor Tom Meredith said.

## Turkey truck crash kills 3

**OK** TAHLEQUAH — A car collided with a tractor-trailer carrying 11,000 pounds of frozen turkeys, killing three people, authorities said.

The victims were in the car, which drove through a stop sign around 6 p.m., according to the Oklahoma Highway Patrol.

Nobody in the truck was injured. "There was nothing we could do about it," said Aaron Gower, a passenger in the truck. "It was like they didn't even know there was a stop sign."

## Boy hit, killed by car

**FL** FLORAL CITY — Each school morning, Sean Ryan Sullivan's mother, Carmen, helped him get ready for the day.

She made sure he was dressed and fed, homework in hand. Then she watched from the front screen door as her son headed for the nearby bus stop.

As her son ran the nearly 200 yards, she noticed the next-door neighbor pull her Pontiac sedan out of the driveway and make a wide turn onto the road.

Blinded by the sun, the neighbor drove across the center of the two-lane road and struck the 8-year-old as his mother watched.

Emergency crews flew Sean to a hospital, where he died a few hours later, authorities said.

"The family's torn up. (The neighbor) is pretty torn up," said Mark Turner, the boy's uncle. "He was very loving, a boisterous and fun-loving kid."

The Florida Highway Patrol is investigating, but no charges have been filed, a spokesman said.



## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Heaven? No, the DMV

**MO** KANSAS CITY — Missouri's oldest full-time state employee figures she's got 10 more years to go before it's time to retire. By then, her age will be in triple digits and she can "take four or five years off and party."

Virginia Arn, who just turned 90, said her job at the Division of Motor Vehicle and Drivers Licensing is "heaven."

"I love the people. I have a lot of fun with them. People are always asking me how old I am, and I don't mind telling them," she said.

For the past 55 years, Arn has worked as a greeter at the DMV, helping people find the right line and making sure they have the correct paperwork. Office manager Dave Hostetler said she has the best attendance record in the office.

The job, combined with dancing at least four times a week, keeps her going.

"Just think about it, 90 years old and working with a smile every day at the DMV, one place most people don't like to go," said Raymond Hume, division director for the department.

Arn, a widow, has two children, five grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren with another on the way.



### Lighting the season

Musicians participating in the Kansas City, Mo., tree-lighting ceremony at Crown Center Square. Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes and singer Marilyn Maye flipped the switch to turn on 7,200 white lights on the city's Christmas tree.

## Site touts Bay as anti-L.A.

**CA** LOS ANGELES — This just in: Los Angeles finally has something people in San Francisco want — money.

"We love people from Los Angeles. We love when they spend their money in our town. We love that!" says Diane DeRose, the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau executive behind "Not in L.A.," a new campaign to lure winter tourists to the City by the Bay. As the campaign's name implies, whatever you can't find in L.A. you will be able to locate in San Francisco.

Links to the Not in L.A. Web site have been showing up in magazine ads, on coasters left in bars and on "mobile billboards" being moved around town. People who go to the site can find out more about places and landmarks such as Union Square, the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz Island, the Mission district and other parts of the city they may want to visit.

So, just what does San Francisco have that Los Angeles doesn't? That question can be answered in just two words, says S.A. Griffin, an actor who moved south to pursue a career in Hollywood.

"Is there anything they have up there that we don't have here? Yeah — San Francisco," laughs Griffin. "Few places in the world are as beautiful as San Francisco. But you couldn't pay me enough money to move back up there. I couldn't imagine living any place other than Los Angeles."

## Andy Warhol gets bridge

**PA** PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh will soon be home to the Andy Warhol Bridge. The Allegheny County Council approved a resolution renaming Seventh Street Bridge in honor of the Pittsburgh native.

The bridge was chosen because of its proximity to The Andy Warhol Museum. Museum officials are considering holding a renaming ceremony in the spring.

## Hefty bank error

**VA** SUFFOLK — When Mike Kainrath found an extra \$1.8 million in his bank account last week, he had just one thought: "Oh, no! Not again."

Kainrath had found an extra \$115,661 in the account in April 2003, and \$2,700 in November 2002.

According to the notice Kainrath received Nov. 17 from the Bank of New York, the money was supposed to have been transferred between a different bank in New York and one in the Netherlands Antilles.

Kevin Heine, a spokesman for the bank, said that sooner or later the error would have been caught when banks reconciled their transfers to each other.

Kainrath, a marketing research manager at The Virginian-Pilot newspaper in Norfolk, said he was going to make one change the next time he's in New York, just in case another huge sum lands in his account again, even for a few days.

"I'm going to change it to an interest-bearing account," he said.



## Sunny outing

Kristin Fitzgerald jogs against the backdrop of reflections shimmering off the water of University Lake, taking advantage of crisp, sunny weather in Baton Rouge, La.



## Fun with family

Emily Kinder, 13, left, tries to intercept a pass intended for her cousin, James Ahla, 12, in Salina, Kan. The family decided to start a game of football so they could get some post-Thanksgiving exercise.

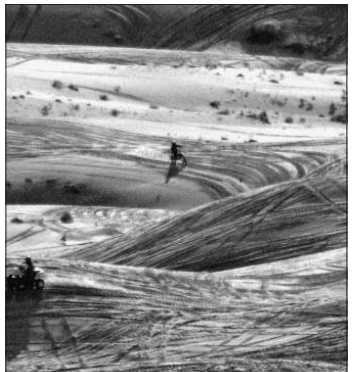


## Santa's li'l bicyclist

Wearing a sweater lined with Christmas lights, Kelly Foley, of Wrightwood, Calif., rides her bike past a decorated float in the Wrightwood Parade of Lights. The event featured motorized vehicles lit up with holiday lights and decorations.



**A colorful discovery** Aly Whalen, from left, Catie Gruenwald and Mackenzie Jenkins, all 10-year-olds from Epiphany Grade School, follow colored circles of light at the Color Dance exhibit on the third floor of the Children's Discovery Museum, in Normal, Ill., after the museum's ribbon-cutting ceremony in downtown Normal.



## Riding the dunes

Off-road drivers navigate the sand dunes at Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area near Glamis, Calif.



## Taking a break

A Louisiana heron rests on a rusty gas tank sunk in a duckweed-filled pond near Bayou Grand Caillou in Dulac, La.

## Gay pride T-shirt lawsuit

**MO** KANSAS CITY — The American Civil Liberties Union sued a southwest Missouri school district for prohibiting a high school student from wearing gay-pride-themed T-shirts.

The district has said the T-shirts were disruptive and therefore a violation of school dress code. The lawsuit filed in federal court also names Webb City High School Principal Stephen P. Gollhofer.

"Because I'm gay, my school is trying to take away my constitutional right as an American to express myself," the student, Brad Mathewson, said in a statement.

The 16-year-old junior started attending the high school this year. On Oct. 20, he came to class wearing a shirt from the Gay-Straight Alliance at his former high school in Fayetteville, Ark.

## Snail may threaten crop

**TX** HOUSTON — Agriculture officials are worried that a non-native snail the size of a fist may grow to threaten the Texas rice crop.

Authorities have discovered the channeled applesnail bodies of water in Southeast Texas, including the Chambers County Golf Course pond.

"So far, these snails have not infested areas sufficiently in Texas to cause damage," Lyubov Burakova, an adjunct biology professor at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, said in Friday's editions of the Houston Chronicle.

Because of the discovery, research scientists, including Burakova, started a study this month of the snail's lifestyle and to project its potential danger to rice crops and aquatic habitat in Texas.

## Missing man's body found

**ND** HETTINGER — A gun and human remains thought to be those of an elderly man with Alzheimer's were found in an abandoned building where the body of his wife was discovered earlier this month.

The remains were found in the attic of the derelict house, Adams County Sheriff Eugene Molbert said. Searchers who previously had looked up through the ceiling boards thought the attic was empty, but Molbert said the man's body was found partly inside a barrel.

Molbert said the gun found was also similar to a .22-caliber gun missing from the couple's home. Autopsy results were expected to make a positive identification.

Norman Olson, 73, and his wife Yvonne, 69, disappeared in August, leaving behind cash, credit cards and thawing meat on the counter of their home in Hettinger, about 100 miles southwest of Bismarck.

## Mysterious noises solved

**VA** RICHMOND — Authorities have arrested a 15-year-old resident of the neighborhood where mysterious booms have frightened residents since the beginning of the month.

The teenager, who was not identified, was charged with possess-

ing or manufacturing an explosive device. The crime, a felony, carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Other youths might also be involved, according to authorities who said a citizen tip led them to the suspect.

The explosions were caused by a simple chemical reaction, a city public works spokesman told the Richmond Times-Dispatch. Three devices recovered by police earlier this week were made of common materials, including plastic soda bottles.

## Sex offender list online

**PA** HARRISBURG — Governor Ed Rendell has signed a law allowing photographs and personal information on more than 7,000 registered sex offenders to be posted on the Internet within six months.

Pennsylvania's current database provides information on just 57 sexual offenders and is available to the public only by e-mail request.

The new law, which Rendell signed Wednesday, calls for a site listing the name, city, county, postal code and picture of every registrant. Street addresses will be posted for the most serious offenders, classified as "sexually violent predators."

Opponents of the expanded Web postings said the law will hurt efforts to rehabilitate convicted sex offenders and likely set off a new wave of court challenges.

## Exorcism or vandalism?

**MN** ST. PAUL — Police are investigating an informal exorcism at the Cathedral of St. Paul directed at gay Roman Catholics. Officials say the ritualistic sprinkling of blessed oil and salt around the church and in donation boxes amounted to costly vandalism and possibly a hate crime. The damage was discovered Nov. 7 and will cost thousands of dollars to clean up.

## Sheriff gets tough

**ID** CALDWELL — Canyon County Sheriff George Nourse believes classifying gang violence as domestic terrorism could help lessen the escalation of street violence. The number of shooting reports in the county of 150,000 people is up nearly 200 since July. Two men have been killed and several others wounded. The city of Caldwell has asked for federal financial help to increase resources to fight street violence and provide young people with alternatives to gang involvement.

## Checking out history

**NH** KEENE — People checking out books from Keene's public library now can check out the library's history, too.

About 130 years of library records have been preserved on microfilm with the help of a state conservation grant. The project cost about \$4,000 — the money was provided through the state's "moose" charity license plate program.

The records range from 1859 minutes of library board trustee meetings through the late 1990s.

Stories and photos from wire services

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## OPINION

## U.S. pays for U.N.'s mistakes in many ways

The horse manure is piled higher than ever, and it stinks to high heaven.

But despite all the evidence to the contrary, many of us still think there must be a pony in there somewhere.

Jack Kelly



The lingering support for the United Nations among Americans is a triumph of hope over experience. The U.N. was (largely) the brainchild of American liberals, who thought that if only the nations of the world had a place where they could talk out their differences, we could put an end to war and all sorts of other bad stuff.

This didn't work so well with the League of Nations, founded after World War I to end all wars, but learning from experience is not something liberals do much of.

It wasn't long before our creation bit us in the tush.

We want the United Nations to promote world peace. But for most of the U.N.'s members today, the primary purpose of the organization is to place shackles on American power.

When a nation is as powerful as ours, it's understandable that the Lilliputians would feel that they have a common interest in restraining Gulliver. What isn't so understandable is why the United States should continue to host, and (largely) pay for, an organization that has made frustrating us its raison d'être.

Most of us would put up with a lot of frustration if it would lead to less violence, hunger, poverty and disease in the world. But the U.N. is doing "a hell of a lot" to do what we imagined it would do back to those heady, idealistic

days at Dumbarton Oaks.

Consider the U.N.'s role in resolving the current political crisis in Ukraine. What role, you ask? Precisely.

Tens of thousands of African villagers in the Darfur region of Sudan are being murdered by Arabs, with the complicity of the Sudanese government. What is the U.N. doing about it? Just what it is doing to resolve the political crisis in the Ukraine.

But it could be said that the Ukrainians and the Sudanese in Darfur are more fortunate than those poor souls who have received "help" in the past. U.N. peacekeepers idly watched genocide in Rwanda, and actually facilitated it in Bosnia. U.N. peacekeepers in the Congo are known best for sexually molesting women under their "protection."

The U.N.'s oil for Food program has become the biggest financial scandal in the history of the world. With the complicity of U.N. officials — including the son of Secretary-General Kofi Annan — Saddam Hussein took at least \$21 billion that was meant to provide food and medicine for poor Iraqis and spent it on palaces, weapons, rewards for terrorists and bribes for Security Council members. Germany and Russia.

Oil for Food is the mother of all U.N. financial scandals, but is hardly the first. In a 1995 paper, Stefan Halper of the Cato Institute described the organization as "a miasma of corruption." Former U.N. aid workers Kenneth Kahn, Heidi Postlewait and Andrew Thomson describe how the U.N. "helps" people in their book "Emergency Sex and Other Desperate Measures." With the United Nations, the difficulty is not in finding corruption; it's finding a U.N. program that isn't awash in it.

Hope is losing ground to experience. In a recent poll, 60 percent of Americans said the U.N. is doing "a hell of a lot" to do what Kofi Annan is aware he has a public rela-



tions problem. He appointed a commission of big shots to recommend reforms. The High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will make its report Thursday.

The panel will say that the U.N. must condemn all terror attacks on civilians or lose its moral authority, the London Telegraph said Monday.

This won't sit well with the kleptocrats who control the General Assembly. They've blocked for years a comprehensive U.N. convention on terrorism on the grounds that it should exclude groups fighting "occupation" or "colonialism," and likely will do so again.

We shouldn't stand for it. If the U.N. continues to turn its back on reform, we should

turn our backs to it.

We hold the high cards. The U.N. cannot survive without our financial contribution (22 percent of its total budget). And few in the U.N. bureaucracy would relish relinquishing the eminence of New York for the delights of, say, Zimbabwe.

A U.N. that actually would promote liberty, democracy and human rights would be eminently worthwhile. But no U.N. at all would be an improvement over the one we've got now.

Jack Kelly is the national affairs writer for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and the Toledo (Ohio) Blade. A former Marine and Green Beret, he was a deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force in the Reagan administration. His column appears weekly in Stars and Stripes.

## Until U.S. pays as it goes, dollar will keep dropping

When President Bush met the leaders of 20 Asian and Pacific nations last week, he wanted to talk about North Korea and Iran. But those nations had another security crisis on their minds — the fall of the dollar.

Daniel Snieder



The dollar is now down to nine-year lows and there are jitters about a financial crisis. If foreign lenders lose confidence, they could trigger a fireball collapse of the dollar. As the cost of imports rises, inflation could jump. And interest rates for banks and home buyers would

more competitive and imports more expensive for American consumers. They are confident the United States remains an attractive place for the world to park its money.

Those currencies that trade freely the euro, Canadian dollar, British pound and, lately, the Japanese yen have gone up rapidly in value against the dollar in the last few weeks. The one major trading partner that has escaped so far is China, whose currency is fixed to the value of the dollar. The Chinese want to keep their exports cheap but American pressure may force a small revaluation of its currency.

Our trading partners are unhappy about the dollar's slide. But this is needed correction. The danger is the fall will encourage countries to reduce their dollar holdings, shifting to euros, gold or Japanese stocks

whose value has been rising.

The problem for the United States is that those dollars are now financing our huge budget deficit, which will hit \$450 billion this year. The administration has been unwilling to ask Americans to pay for the war on terror and the war in Iraq.

The twin deficits are driven in part by the growing difference between what Americans spend and what they earn. American savings — both household, corporate and, of course, government savings — have deteriorated greatly in the last five years. Instead we borrow money abroad ...

The Chinese, emboldened by the reality that we depend on their dollars, now happily lecture us on our profligate ways ...

It is true that Americans consume more than they produce. But we can keep doing it,

up to a point, because the folks who import from (mostly, but not entirely, in Asia) are happy to produce more than they consume and to lend us money to buy their stuff.

"We are stuck with each other — they are the lenders of last resort and we are the consumers of last resort," says Robert Madsen, senior fellow at MIT's Center for International Studies and an expert on Asian economies. "If they stopped lending we would have a lot of trouble. If we stopped consuming, they would go into recession." ...

Ultimately America needs to reduce dangerous dependency on foreign lenders. The only way to do that is to save more and to pay for what we spend on our ourselves and our government.

Daniel Snieder is foreign affairs columnist for the San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News.

soar as investors demand a higher return for their greater risk.

That scenario is probably overdrawn. But the dollar's drop reflects the belief that the American economy is not healthy.

The signs of illness are two huge and growing imbalances — the federal budget deficit and the current account deficit, the shortfall between what America takes in from the world through trade and investment and what it spends. In 1990 the global balance stood at zero. Now the United States is \$665 billion in the hole.

President Bush made soothing noises at the Asian Pacific economic summit about the commitment to a "strong dollar." But investors correctly read the signals that the actual policy is to let markets drive down the value of the dollar in an orderly way.

The administration sees dollar devaluation as a way to correct a global imbalance. It will make American exports cheaper and

## Mallard Fillmore



BY BRUCE TINSLEY

# Horoscope

There are no exact aspects to speak of in the heavens today, and that is, in and of itself, remarkable. It's an opportunity for viewing a million shades of gray in the spectrum between black and white. Since we can never really know what it's like to experience life as someone else, extending the benefit of the doubt is the natural thing to do.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 1).** This year finally highlights an under-rated area of your life—fun and recreation.

Social breakthroughs in the next five weeks get you participating in new circles and interests. Dates and business contacts spring from your playtime. Sock away some of the extra money you make for travel in the spring. Long love is featured with Pisces and Aries.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You and a colleague have substantial differences, but you cannot deny your admiration. Be sure to acknowledge others for their contributions, and your way is made easier. Tonight, challenge someone to take action.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** The world is not black and white. But you do need to make choices in life, and sometimes, the choices have obvious consequences. Denial, stalling yourself to the minutiae will have doing what you have to do easier.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You're in a position to say something meaningful. Choosing the exact right words will be key. Otherwise, your subjects miss the point. At work, do your research, and make sure you're not raising a moot point.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** What you've got to be terrific. Admit it! Praise it! Cherish it! Avoid thinking about the great job/date/apartment you didn't get. There will always be another better job/date/apartment that you don't have.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** A contribution you'd like to make may feel very, very small indeed. You may even be embarrassed and

therefore tempted to not even bother to do it. But do it anyway. Small gestures are what make your character so remarkable.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).**

The step you've been thinking of taking can be achieved. Look hard at your beliefs about money. The fastest way to improve your income is to seek work that gives you a greater sense of purpose.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** You're a fair leader, but your leadership will be challenged nonetheless.

You'll be dealing with a strong-willed significant other, stepchild or parent. Gain control of your emotions, and keep your focus on the problem at hand.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Other people's dreams seem outrageous, but don't laugh—and if anyone else laughs, spring to the dreamer's defense. People who don't have dreams don't have much. By the end of the day, you'll believe in love at first sight.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You know those questions you've been asking other people? Well, it's time to pose the same questions to yourself. You may just be surprised how smart you can be when talking to an intellectual equal.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Keep fun on the to-do list. In fact, what do you think would happen if you put fun first? You just might wind up enjoying your work so much that you've never been so productive in your life.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** What you're aiming for should be obvious to everyone around you and, of course, to yourself. Verbalize your goal. You may have to fute with the wording or the trust of it for a while until it's perfectly clear to everyone.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Your partner's needs and your own could polarize now. Stay calm. The stars nurture your thought processes and help you tap into your unconscious mind for solutions. Also, a Libra can help you find the compromise.

Creators Syndicate

## Holiday Mathis



## Calvin and Hobbes



## Jump Start



## Zits



## Cathy



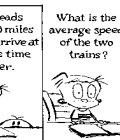
## Hi and Lois



## Beetle Bailey



## Red Rover



## Better or Worse

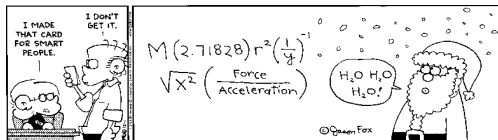


## Peanuts





Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



Hagar



Garfield



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18				19				20				
			21		22	23		24		25	26	27
28	29	30					31		32			
33				34				35		36		
37			38		39				40			
41				42		43						
			44		45			46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54			55		
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

### Across

- Vacationing
- disappear
- Imperfection
- "Take — Train"
- Crones
- Ancient Greek poet
- Polio precursor
- Gets greedy with
- Bread spread
- Oklahoma city
- Bad thing to be behind
- Clark's companion
- Longing
- Practice pugilism
- Famous
- Unfaithful one
- Expose
- Fine, to NASA
- Arias, e.g.
- Ad —
- a-brac
- Beer buys
- Daub
- Blue hue
- Cattle call
- Hyper personality
- Sports-page announcement
- Stirrup's locale
- Loud lamentation
- Domesticated
- Performance
- Probability
- Luminary
- Reticent
- Gradually
- Surveillance
- Dennis Rodman
- nickname
- Tom Tom, e.g.
- Theater name
- of old
- Splash
- everywhere
- Caravan pack
- Whatever amount
- Caviar
- Makes a decision
- Pod dwellers
- Apiece
- Bohemian
- Seesaw quorum
- Swindled
- Disencomfited
- Nosh
- "Camera"

### Answer to Previous Puzzle

SLAM	OBOW	COP
HOLA	HORN	OLE
EXPLAINED	NEO	
	ICON	UPTON
SEDGE	AREA	
PAIN	CCELERITY	
ESS	WAGES	NAE
WEDDINGS	BELL	
AUNT	YODEL	
BLIND	SEED	
RAN	UNTRAINED	
IRE	PEEN	COVE
ODD	SAWS	EDEN

### Down

1 October stone

### 12-1

### CRYPTOQUIP

HVCHJOX LSPCSZXZ GSDIX  
PUZV AJ DVVK HIJZZ  
LUPNJOZ. XIJN'OJ AVXI

DOPCK GPZXJOZ.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DO INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE REMOVING APPLE CENTERS CONSIDER THEMSELVES A CORE GROUP?  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equal S

# Someone lying in messy proposal

**Dear Abby:** My name is "Lenny" and I live in Florida. About six weeks ago, my girlfriend, "Jill," and I broke up.

Jill is 20 and I am 41. She was abandoned by her parents as an infant.

Jill and her folks moved to Illinois, but we talk on the phone at least three times a week. I proposed marriage, but Jill said she couldn't make the decision without her father's approval. Her mother was all for it; her father was not.

Jill says that when her parents adopted her, her father put a clause in the contract that he had the right to choose the man she was to marry — and it was signed by a judge in the state of Illinois. This is legal.

**Dear Frustrated:** No, it's not. Either Jill is lying to you, or

someone is lying to her.

**Dear Abby:** I have eight siblings. I am the only one who is still single. My brothers and sisters are upstanding members of their communities, happily married and raising beautiful families. Until a few years ago, we all got together for the holidays. Now that the children are here — 20 at last count — my sis pre-fer to spend the holidays in their own homes with their families. We get together a couple of weeks before Christmas to exchange gifts.

I'd love to spend the day with family, and I'm hoping they will see this letter and think of me.

— All Alone in Maryland

**Dear All Alone:** And what if they happen to be too busy to read the column today? Your siblings aren't mind readers, so

tell them what you told me. And if an invitation isn't forthcoming, make plans for the Christmas holiday with close friends or volunteer at a shelter.

**Dear Abby:** I'm 11 and in sixth grade. I recently caught a girl in my class copying off my paper. When I asked her not to, she denied doing it.

I told the teacher then, and the teacher replied, "She is having trouble with her work and personal problems at home. Just imagine if this math was hard for you."

The girl has ADHD. Should I continue to let this girl copy me?

**Dear Student:** No, you should not. Because if you do, a girl who is already having trouble with math will never learn how to solve the problems herself.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69404, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uepress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

Dear Abby



## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MEWNO

SQUET

NESING

BOCIXE

Ans: " " ON

Yesterday's Jumbles: KETCH CRAFT TYCOON RATHER

Answer: What the landlord did when the furnace failed — TOOK THE HEAT

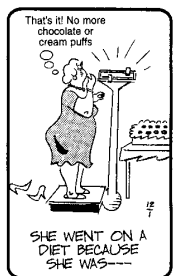
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www.jumble.com

(Answers tomorrow)

## THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

# Family abuse revelation shocking

**Dear Annie:** Do you think ostriches are emotionally healthy? I ask because I want to hide my head in a hole.

I come from a family of five adult children. Dad passed away a few years back, and as I write this, Mom has been in the hospital for a month. Her hospitalization has caused an awkward reunification of the siblings.

During a lengthy phone call with my younger sister, she revealed that she and my youngest brother were repeatedly sexually abused by my oldest brother. Although I urged her to seek professional help, I am having difficulty digesting this 40-year-old information.

My relationship with my older brother hasn't been good for years.

(He was a Vietnam vet, and I was a war protester.) Still, I always respected and looked up to him. Now, I feel the big brother I once loved is a sham.

I live in another state with a wonderful husband and two great

Annie's Mailbox



children. I want to wash my hands of the lot of my siblings and the dirty family secrets they have kept. My mother, however, wants her family around her. I don't think she is aware of my brother's incestuous behavior, and if she did know, I suspect she put it away somewhere deep in the recesses of her memory.

Should I keep up appearances until my mother passes on (which could be in 10 years or 10 minutes)? This goes against every grain of my being. Should I confront my brother?

— Disillusioned Sister

**Dear Sister:** If you are 100 percent certain that your sister's accusations are true, you should confront your brother. But don't blame your other siblings for what happened. It is unfair to estrange them all because you are angry with one. And it would be self-serving and hurtful to create a family rift while your mother is hospitalized.

**Dear Annie:** I would like to comment on your advice to "Freakin' Out in Philly," who resented that her parents left the family business to her brothers. She sounds like a victim of her own making.

If the sisters really want a piece of the business, why don't they act like businesswomen and approach their brothers about investing or becoming partners, instead of harassing their elderly parents about fairness? Parents often base such decisions on who they think would be most likely to carry on the business in the spirit in which it was created. Obviously, the sons are doing a good job if their wives and children are bragging about "living the good life." This woman needs to find a way to respect her parents' decision.

— Wife of an Inheritor

**Dear Wife:** Your perspective has merit. Thanks for writing. Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to [anniesmailbox@comcast.net](mailto:anniesmailbox@comcast.net), or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate



"A, E, I, O and U are vowels and the other letters are continents."

## GRAFFITI

SECOND MARRIAGE HOPE OVER EXPERIENCE

M&A 12/1

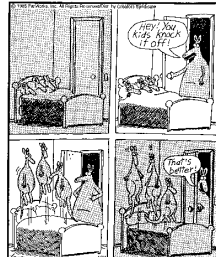
Dennis the Menace



"SORRY, SPORT... I CAN'T ARREST A GIRL JUST FOR TALKING TOO MUCH."

© Gary Larson

The Far Side



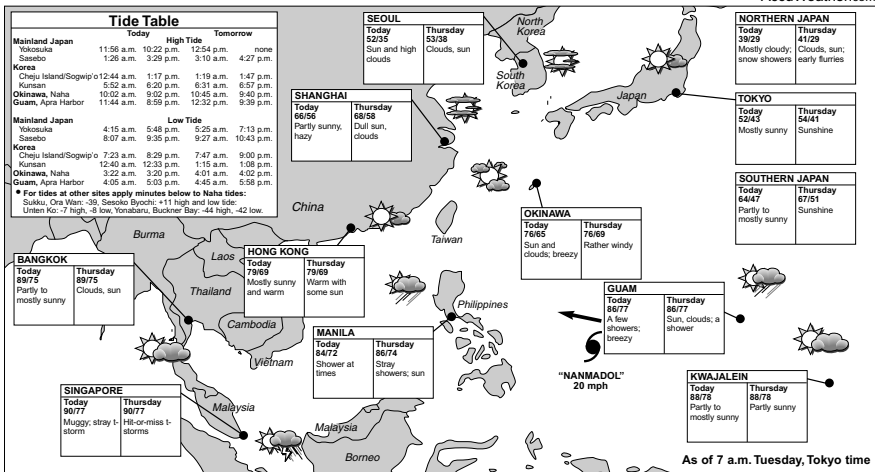
Non Sequitur



# The Pacific Forecast

All forecasts and maps provided by AccuWeather, Inc. © 2004

AccuWeather.com



## Extended Forecasts

<b>TOKYO</b> Friday: Partly sunny, high 65, low 49. Saturday: Showers, high 64, low 53.	<b>KADENA</b> Friday: Showers, high 76, low 69. Saturday: Showers, high 76, low 67.	<b>SEUL</b> Friday: Showers, high 53, low 35. Saturday: Showers, high 53, low 30.	<b>MANILA</b> Friday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 86, low 74. Saturday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 86, low 74.	<b>HAGATNA</b> Friday: Partly sunny, high 86, low 77. Saturday: Partly sunny, high 88, low 77.
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## Monday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	31/18	Los Angeles	65/40
Amarillo	30/17	Little Rock	55/46
Anchorage	40/25	Louisville	49/43
Ashville	55/38	Miami	82/68
Baltimore	52/30	Milwaukee	39/28
Birmingham	68/52	Nashville	58/46
Bismarck	39/15	New York	52/36
Boise	35/21	Omaha	33/20
Boston	50/32	Orlando	79/58
Brownsville	87/67	Philadelphia	52/35
Buffalo	40/32	Phoenix	54/34
Burlington	39/25	Pittsburgh	44/32
Charleston, SC	64/45	Portland, OR	44/38
Charlotte	59/38	Portland, ME	49/28
Cleveland	44/32	Salt Lake City	31/14
Columbus, OH	44/34	St. Louis	43/38
Duluth	29/16	San Antonio	79/44
El Paso	49/23	San Diego	65/42
Hartford	52/28	San Juan	85/74
Helena	33/14	Tampa	81/60
Indianapolis	44/36	Tulsa	53/33
Jacksonville	75/53	Washington	53/37
Kansas City	37/27	Wichita	36/26

## Wednesday, December 01



## U.S. Extended Forecast

A low pressure system moving into the Ohio Valley on Wednesday will bring showers and thunderstorms from West Virginia southward into eastern Louisiana. This system will also spread rain across much of the Northeast early in the day. As the cold front associated with this system moves east in the afternoon, cold air behind it will produce furies or light snow throughout New England, western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania. Another low pressure system moving down from the Rockies will produce furies and light snow across the mountains of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Thursday will be a bit quieter across the nation with the exception of some furies or light snow in Minnesota.

## Wednesday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	89/75	Iskani	62/46
Beijing	49/39	Kadena AB	76/65
Camp Casey	54/32	Kunsan AB	55/40
Christchurch	66/45	Kwajalein	88/76
Diego Garcia	86/78	Manila	84/72
Hagatna	86/77	Masawa AB	42/32
Hanoi	79/64	Osan	53/33
Hong Kong	79/69	Perth	76/60
Honolulu	84/72	Pusan	58/43

## Wednesday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Acapulco	90/74	Budapest	48/42	Kabul	51/21
Athens	62/52	Buenos Aires	90/68	Kiev	32/31
Auckland	70/58	Cairo	74/51	Kuwait	67/43
Baghdad	64/37	Cancun	83/68	London	45/38
Barbados	83/68	Cape Town	75/51	Madrid	49/32
Barcelona	52/45	Geneva	40/38	Mexico City	72/46
Berlin	44/32	Istanbul	55/46	Montreal	35/30
Bermuda	75/66	Jerusalem	61/43	Mogadishu	87/74
Brussels	39/32	Johannesburg	84/56	Moscow	21/16
				Warsaw	45/35



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# BEST BUYS

**ON SALE December 2 - December 15**



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**Lay's STAX**

**89¢**



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## Gift certificates expanding to all commissaries

By Bonnie Powell  
bonnie.powell@deca.mil

FORT LEE, Va. — The fifth year of Scholarships for Military Children is now underway. Administered by Fisher House Foundation and funded by the manufacturers and industry supporting commissaries, the program has awarded over \$3 million through nearly 2,000 scholarships to the sons and daughters of active duty service members, Guard and Reserve members, and military retirees.

"The Scholarships for Military Children program has become a major community event for commissaries since its inception five years ago," said Patrick B. Nixon, chief executive officer for the Defense Commissary Agency. "The program awarded 500 scholarships in 2004 and ceremonies were held in commissaries worldwide in honor of these outstanding students. The industry members who support this program should be proud — and we hope the fifth anniversary year will be the best yet!"

Applications for the 2005 program are available at commissaries or online at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>. A link to the program will be on <http://www.commissaries.com>, the DeCA Web site. Eligibility and other information are also available at the program Web site. Applications, which must include an essay on how the heightened awareness of terrorism has impacted the student's life, are due at commissaries

Feb. 16, 2005. At least one \$1,500 scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants.

The scholarship program is open to unmarried children under the age of 21 (23 if enrolled in school) of active duty personnel, Reserve, Guard and retired military. Eligibility will be determined using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database. Applicants should ensure that they, as well as their sponsor, are currently enrolled in the DEERS database and have a current ID card.

The applicant must be planning to attend, or already attending, an accredited college or university full-time in the fall term of 2005, or enrolled in a program of studies designed to transfer directly into a four-year program.

The scholarship program can also accept public donations at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>.



## Commissary shopping meets holiday needs — traditional and nutritional

By Rick Brink  
richard.brink@deca.mil

FORT LEE, Va. — The holidays are upon us and the commissary is the place to meet the nutritional as well as traditional needs of its shoppers around the world.

For those who yearn for something other than the traditional feast, the wide variety of products and services offered in commissaries make them ideal places to shop for food — whether it's in quantities large enough for a party or ready-to-eat food just for one.

"This is the time of year when our sales peak because people traditionally get together for the holidays and they require food appropriate for the occasions. Commissary product variety and selection suits any occasion, and commissary shoppers buy more for their money because they save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices," said Scott Simpson, DeCA's chief operating officer.

With commissary services, customers don't even have to cook to throw a decent party. Fresh fruit and vegetable party trays, custom-decorated cakes, finger food trays, all kinds of snack items and drinks are available at most stores. The agency's Web site, <http://www.commissaries.com>, makes it easy to find the appropriate department's phone number to place orders.

The wide variety of products sold in commissaries also suits the special dietary needs of many customers. There are low-calorie, low-carb, low-cholesterol — just about any kind of whatever products you can think of — available in stores. Dietary supplements such as vitamins and other nutrients are also available.

Speaking of diet, what about the traditional turkey dinner? According to Kay Blackley, DeCA Europe's consumer advocate, the traditional side dishes like dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, candied sweet potatoes and green bean casserole topped with French fried onions weigh in at between 200 to 300 calories per serving. That's about as many calories as dessert — a slice of pumpkin pie topped with whipped cream.

While that may bring a frown to folks' faces, the good news is that turkey is a real bargain in both calories and cost. A 3-ounce serving of boneless, skinless turkey breast is about 120 calories while a serving of dark turkey meat is about 160 calories, Blackley says.

Her advice for those who want the feast without adding pounds is this: "Remember that it takes an extra 3,500 calories above what you expend to put one pound of weight on your frame. So, get out your calculator and figure out how you'll have to trim consumption in the days ahead to make up for this one glorious meal."







# Odds are stacked against BCS

## Bowl formula has too many problems that time can't heal

By CHRIS DUFRESNE  
Los Angeles Times

"Have patience," University of Oregon President Dave Frohnmayer counseled reporters on a teleconference two weeks ago when it was suggested college football might be fast-tracking toward another laughable conclusion.

### Commentary

Frohnmayer, point man for school presidents rejecting any kind of playoff, said it was "stunning" that so many people were complaining about changes in the Bowl Championship Series formula before the season had even played out.

"Let's see how the postseason stacks up after all the returns are in," he said.

Here it's stacking up with one week left in the regular season: Utah and Boise State have already clinched undefeated regular seasons.

Neither has a stake in the national title race because they play in non-BCS conferences — the Mountain West and Western Athletic.

Meanwhile, in the so-called "power" conferences, Pittsburgh of the Big East can clinch a major bowl bid next week even if it loses to South Florida and finishes with a 7-4 record.

Pittsburgh, in fact, may be the first school to earn a BCS game with a coach, Walt Harris, who might get fired. A month ago, Harris' agent demanded his underappreciated client either be handed an extension or his walking papers.

Two-loss Michigan has already wrapped up a Rose Bowl bid and a two-loss team is going to win the Atlantic Coast Conference and a \$16 million bowl berth.

If Colorado beats Oklahoma next week, Gary Barnett's Buffaloes win the Big 12 title with an 8-4 record and could face 7-4 Pitt in the Fiesta Bowl.

That would be eight losses, for two teams, in one BCS bowl, while the Liberty Bowl, which pays \$1.35 million, gets to match 11-0 Boise State against Louisville in a battle of probable top-10 teams.

Remember, though, the Liberty is not a "major" bowl, so pay it no serious attention!

Here it's stacking up II: Pitt's in Michigan's in, Colorado has a puncher's chance yet it appears either 10-1 California or 10-1 Texas will get left out of a BCS game.

Sorry, boys, but those are the convoluted rules and, thus far, in the at-large animal kingdom bid battle, the Golden Bears are holding off the Longhorns.

Texas coach Mack Brown was so apologetic over possibly getting shut out of a BCS game — despite not winning his own division of his own conference — he resorted to begging for votes after Texas' holiday-weekend win over Texas A&M.

Based on Sunday's poll points, Mack, you need to hire Karl Rowe.

California picked up five points on Texas in the writers' poll and nine points in the coaches'.

How it's stacking up III: USC, Oklahoma and Auburn are all undefeated headed into regular-season finale games. All will be fa-



Pittsburgh quarterback Tyler Palko liked the noise the crowd made when the Panthers upset West Virginia, but now the chatter is that the Panthers don't belong in a BCS bowl.



Knowing his Longhorns are likely to be left out of the BCS again this year despite a No. 5 ranking, Texas coach Mack Brown lobbied for votes after beating Texas A&M last week.

vored to win next weekend.

Wait, though — there has never been a BCS season in which more than two top-10 teams have ended with no losses. And now there could be five! Isn't this against the rules? Unfortunately, you can't cram five, four or three undefeated teams into one BCS championship game, so this is shaping up to be a quite a quagmire.

The three top schools are all making vehement claims for being best in BCS show. USC, for example, was leading Notre Dame, 34-10, late in Saturday's game and then made it 41-10 on a touchdown set up by a fake punt on fourth down.

No way was USC coach Pete Carroll trying to tack on a score to impress the judges, even though, that very same day, two yaahoos on ABC — or was it two ABC's on Yahoo? — claimed USC was a bogus No. 1 and that Oklahoma and Auburn deserved to play for the title.

For what it's worth, one analyst played running back for the only school ever to receive

the NCAA "death penalty" and the other played for ... Notre Dame.

Fear not, though, because former Notre Dame coach Bob Davie has a "simple solution" for saving the BCS.

Davie presented in written and oral arguments last week a proposal to have all 117 Division I-A coaches vote for the two teams they want to play for the national title.

That's right, the coaches.

Davie says give these O-and-X-men a box of tapes and two days and they'll figure out the two best teams.

"Let them decide their national champion," Davie wrote.

Davie is a tremendous ESPN analyst — much better at breaking down action than he was at whipping the Irish into national contention — yet his idea of turning the BCS over to the coaches is akin to turning a hen house over to the foxes.

Davie wants to add more voting coaches to the gaggle that last year had USC at No. 1 until the Trojans defeated Michigan in the Rose Bowl, after which the coaches awarded their share of the national championship to Louisiana State.

These are the same voting coaches who recently voted, 32-29, not to make their final ballots public this year.

And no wonder, given that last week, California lost points in the coaches' poll to Texas after the Bears beat Stanford by 35 points and the Longhorns spent the weekend feeding hay to Bevo.

These are the same coaches who, last week, had Michigan No. 1 until it had the gall to beat Washington State in the Rose Bowl.

Let the coaches decide? Even tossing aside all the lost logic, Davie fails to mention that The Associated Press poll is independent of the coaches and is not going away, so what controversy has Davie solved?

"Have patience," counseled the university president from the school where the movie "Animal House" was filmed.

Pardon us if we think a food fight might be a better way to produce a champion than what the BCS currently offers.

True, there is one week left for some of this potential mess to sort itself out.

Time is running short, however, the BCS is on the clock and, frankly, patience is wearing thin.

## Auburn still third with little it can do

By RALPH D. RUSSO  
The Associated Press

Auburn needs an upset. The Tigers are still stuck behind first-place Southern California and second-place Oklahoma in the Bowl Championship Series standings, heading into the final weekend before the national title game is decided.

Third-place Auburn needs to beat Tennessee in the Southeastern Conference title game Saturday and hope for USC to lose at UCLA or Oklahoma to fall in the Big 12 title game against Colorado to earn a spot in the Orange Bowl and play for the BCS championship.

USC improved its BCS grade in the standings released Monday to 9834, and padded its lead over the Sooners (.9611). The Tigers have a grade of 9342.

While Oklahoma and Auburn were idle last week, the Trojans beat Notre Dame 41-10 to regain some support in The Associated Press Top 25 and coaches poll.

The polls each count for a third of a team's BCS grade. A compilation of six computer rankings are used to determine the other third. USC holds a big lead in both polls, ahead of No. 2 Oklahoma and No. 3 Auburn. The Sooners and Tigers are separated by a total of only 17 points in the two polls, but the BCS computers have pegged Oklahoma as the No. 1 team in the country with USC second and Auburn third.

California (.8431) barely held on to the fourth spot, ahead of Texas (.8418), after the Longhorns ended the season with a 26-13 victory over Texas A&M last week.

The Golden Bears will lock up a spot in the BCS by beating Southern Mississippi on Saturday. The Bears would play in the Rose Bowl for the first time in 45 years if USC ends up in the Orange Bowl.

Sixth-place Utah (.8224) is guaranteed an at-large bid as a team from a non-BCS conference with a top-six finish in the BCS standings. The Utah (11-0), from the Mountain West Conference, finished their season two weeks ago and are sure to become the first team from a mid-major conference to play in the BCS.

Boise State (.6510) dropped from seventh to eighth in the BCS standings behind Georgia (.6948).

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# Heels have little trouble with USC

BY KEITH PARSONS  
The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Southern California coach Henry Bibby got a lot better look at North Carolina than he needed.

"We played probably a Final Four team," Bibby said. "We aren't going to see too many teams better than the team we faced tonight."

Playing their fifth game in eight days, the 11th-ranked Tar Heels got 23 points from Jawad Williams and 17 from Sean May to beat the Trojans 97-65 Sunday night.

Raymond Felton added 12 assists for North Carolina (4-1), which won the Maui Invitational in convincing fashion last week, outscoring its opponents by an average of 21 points. An all-night plane ride got the players back to campus late Friday, and they practiced almost immediately.

Another workout followed on Saturday, then the Tar Heels quickly went to work on Southern California (1-1).

"We needed something to humble us a bit," Bibby said. "It puts things back into perspective for us. We need to go back to the drawing boards."

The score was tied only at 2, and Jackie Manuel's jumper gave North Carolina the lead for good. It reached double figures on

a three-pointer by Rashad McCants about 6½ minutes into the first half, and May's free throw made it a 20-point margin with about 5 minutes left.

"I was worried about us being a little stagnant, a little too casual out there," Tar Heels coach Roy Williams said. "I feel very good about the win. I think we played exceptionally well."

North Carolina had a 22-5 run to close the opening 20 minutes, and the Trojans never recovered. This wasn't quite the homecoming Bibby wanted — he grew up in tiny Franklin, about 30 miles from Chapel Hill.

Jeff McMillan scored 10 points for USC, which fell to 0-7 against North Carolina.

"It just shows me how much work we need to do to get where we need to be," Bibby said. "I thought the kids played hard out on the floor, but I don't think we always played smart. They'll get better as things go on."

Scoring never was a problem for the Tar Heels, who returned the Atlantic Coast Conference's top scorer (McCants), top rebounder (May) and assist man (Felton) for Roy Williams' second season. This was their third straight game with at least 90 points.

Their play on the other end of the court has been the focus, and so far, North Caroli-

na appears better. The Trojans shot only 35 percent and had 28 turnovers, including 16 in the first half.

"I think we were in a little bit of a frenzy defensively in the first half, and that's good, if you can still be fundamentally sound," Roy Williams said.

The change was apparent during the decisive spurt. USC shot 2-for-10 in the final 7½ minutes, including a block by the 6-foot-4 McCants on the 6-11 Rory O'Neil. That started a highlight-reel fast break, with McCants whirling around Derrick Craven and passing to Felton, who lobbed the ball to Jawad Williams for a powerful dunk.

At that point, the Tar Heels led 56-25 — their first 30-point lead of the game — and the second half essentially was garbage time.

"I think we were doing some trapping out there that was frustrating them," May said. "They lost their rhythm."

Another point of emphasis for North Carolina this season has been shaking the ball, and if the first half was any indication, that problem is solved, too. Every player who got on the court had at least one assist, led by Felton's six, and 17 of the 22 baskets came after assists.

"When you see somebody passing the ball to a teammate, it makes you want to



North Carolina's Jawad Williams, right, draws a foul on Southern Cal's Reggie Guenther (4) on Sunday. Williams scored a game-high 23 points.

pass it," Manuel said. "To me, when I pass the ball to somebody and he scores, that feels just as good as when I score."

## Florida St. headed to Gator Bowl

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Florida State coach Bobby Bowden will face his former team for the first time in more than two decades when the 16th-ranked Seminoles play West Virginia in the Gator Bowl.

The Mountaineers (8-3) accepted an invitation to the Jan. 1 bowl Monday, and bowl officials said Florida State (8-3) would be named the opponent Tuesday.

Bowden coached at West Virginia from 1970 to 1975. He took over at Florida State in January 1976 and now has the most coaching victories (350) in Division I-A history.

He last faced the Mountaineers in the 1982 Gator Bowl, which the Seminoles won 31-12. West Virginia coach Rich Rodriguez was a defensive back for the Mountaineers at that game.

Rodriguez, an assistant under Bowden's son Tommy at Tulane and Clemson before taking over at West Virginia before the 2001 season, said he has known Bobby Bowden for nearly 30 years. He also said he gleaned much of his coaching style from the elder Bowden.

"I have not only tremendous respect for coach Bowden and what he has done as a football coach, but even more respect for him as a person," Rodriguez said Monday. "A lot of personal philosophy and ideas that I've developed through my own career came from the Bowden family. I'm proud to say that. He's a true legend of the game."

### College bowl schedule

<b>Tuesday, Dec. 14</b> <b>New Orleans Bowl</b> Payoff: \$750,000 North Texas (7-4) vs. So. Miss. (6-4)	<b>Emerald Bowl</b> Payoff: \$750,000 MWC No. 3 vs. Navy (8-2)
<b>Tuesday, Dec. 21</b> <b>Champs Sports Bowl</b> Payoff: \$550,000 ACC vs. Big 12	<b>Holiday Bowl</b> Payoff: \$2 million Pac-10 No. 2 vs. Big 12 No. 3
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 22</b> <b>GMAC Bowl</b> Payoff: \$750,000 CUSA vs. MAC or WAC	<b>Shane's Valley State</b> Payoff: \$750,000 SEC vs. MAC, I-II, III
<b>CUSA vs. MAC or WAC</b> Payoff: \$750,000 CUSA No. 23 vs. Ford (7-4)	<b>Friday, Dec. 31</b> <b>Musica City Bowl</b> Payoff: \$1 million SEC vs. Big Ten No. 1
<b>CUSA No. 6 vs. Big 12 No. 8</b> Payoff: \$750,000 MWC No. 2 vs. Texas Tech (7-4)	<b>Sun Bowl</b> Payoff: \$1.5 million Purdue (7-4) vs. Pac-10 No. 3
<b>Friday, Dec. 24</b> <b>Liberty Bowl</b> Payoff: \$750,000 CUSA vs. WAC	<b>Liberty Bowl</b> Payoff: \$1.5 million MWC champion or TCU vs. Louisville (9-1)
<b>Monday, Dec. 27</b> <b>MPC Computers Bowl</b> Payoff: \$750,000 WAC vs. ACC No. 1	<b>Peach Bowl</b> Payoff: \$2.2 million ACC No. 3 vs. SEC No. 3
<b>Monday, Dec. 28</b> <b>Independence Bowl</b> Payoff: \$2 million Big 12 vs. SEC	<b>Saturday, Jan. 1</b> <b>Outback Bowl</b> Payoff: \$3 million SEC vs. Big 12 No. 2
<b>Insight Bowl</b> Payoff: \$750,000 Pac-10 No. 4 vs. Notre Dame (6-5)	<b>Wisconsin (9-2) vs. SEC No. 3</b> Payoff: \$1.6 million Florida State (8-3) vs. West Virginia (8-3)
<b>Wednesday, Dec. 29</b> <b>Alamo Bowl</b> Payoff: \$1.1 million Texas-El Paso (7-4) vs. Big 12 No. 12	<b>Capital One Bowl</b> Payoff: \$5.187 million Iowa (9-2) vs. SEC
<b>Thursday, Dec. 30</b> <b>Continental Tire Bowl</b> Payoff: \$750,000 Big East No. 4 vs. North Carolina (6-5)	<b>Rose Bowl</b> Payoff: \$4.5 million Michigan (9-2) vs. Pac-10 champion or TCU
	<b>Fiesta Bowl</b> Payoff: \$1.4 million BCS vs. BCS
	<b>Monday, Jan. 3</b> <b>Sugar Bowl</b> Payoff: \$1.4 million BCS vs. BCS
	<b>Tuesday, Jan. 4</b> <b>Orange Bowl</b> Payoff: \$1.1 million BCS vs. BCS

West Virginia, which lost its last two regular season games, will be making a second straight trip to the Gator Bowl.

The Mountaineers were the front-runners to earn the Big East's guaranteed Bowl Championship Series bid before their 36-17 loss to Boston College two weeks ago. West Virginia ended the regular season with 16-13 loss to Pittsburgh on Thanksgiving night.

Last year, West Virginia lost to Maryland 41-7 in the Gator Bowl. The Mountaineers have lost all four of their Gator Bowl appearances, and 10 of their last 11 bowl games overall, dating back to the 1987 Sun Bowl.

In other bowl games, the Cincinnati Bearcats were invited Sunday to play in the Fort Worth Bowl, a day after losing 70-7 to

North Carolina. The bowl, played on Dec. 23, is one of five affiliated with Conference USA. A Big 12 team normally would get the other invitation, but the bowl-eligible schools have locked up bids already.

Bowl officials are negotiating with the Atlantic Coast, Big East and Mid-American conferences for another participant.

Cincinnati (6-5) rallied from a 2-4 start to earn its fourth bowl appearance in the last five seasons. Quarterback Tim Lincecum slipped and broke his hand in the week before the loss to Louisville and will not be available for the Bearcats.

## Stanford coach Teevens fired after three seasons

The Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — Stanford football coach Buddy Teevens was fired after three straight losing seasons, an athletic department source said Monday on condition of anonymity.

The school called an afternoon news conference. A call to Teevens' home Monday was not immediately returned.

Athletic director Ted Leland, a close personal friend of Teevens, met with the coach last week after the Cardinal finished 4-7 for the second consecutive year. Stanford lost 41-6 to archrival California in the Big Game on Nov. 20 for its fifth straight defeat, ending a season that began 4-2 with hopes of a bowl game.

The 48-year-old Teevens, who had two years remaining on his contract, is the first Stanford football coach to be fired since Jack Elway was dismissed in 1988 after three years.

Fans and alumni seemed to lose faith in Teevens for good following the embarrassing Big Game, but the bowl-eligible school showed little promise in the waning moments, getting flagged for several personal fouls. Stanford struggled to score throughout Teevens' tenure.

Teevens finished with a 10-23 record in three seasons after taking over the program when Tyrone Williams bolted for Notre Dame following the 2001 season. Teevens spent the three previous seasons on Steve Spurrier's staff at Florida.

Teevens was fired as Tulane head coach in 1996 after refusing to resign because he didn't want his players to think he'd quit on them.

The Cardinal went 0-13 down the stretch during Teevens' three seasons. They were close in the

### Sports briefs

final minutes in five defeats this season — including 31-28 against No. 1 Southern California.

#### Police ID fan who threw chair in NBA brawl

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Police said Monday they know the identity of the man who threw a chair in a brawl between players and fans during the Indiana-Detroit game on Nov. 19.

Police did not identify the man, though they said he is a 35-year-old Pistons' season-ticket holder. He has not been interviewed and is not in custody. Police Lt. James Manning said police have met with the man's attorney.

The lawyer, Kenneth Karasick, did not immediately respond to a telephone message seeking comment.

Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorycya has said the man who threw the chair, which hit several people including a police officer, could be charged with felony assault.

#### Brewers, Miller finalize deal

MILWAUKEE — Catcher Damian Miller's \$8.75 million, three-year contract with the Milwaukee Brewers was finalized Monday.

While the deal was agreed to last week and Miller took a physical Wednesday, the Brewers put off completing the agreement because it couldn't find any of its team physicians to read the MRI exam results ahead of the holiday weekend.

Miller gets \$3.25 million in each of the next two seasons and Milwaukee has a \$3.75 million option for 2007.

# Jeff George is back, and the Bears have him

Three years after last game, he's just glad to get call

BY NANCY ARMOUR  
The Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Talent was never Jeff George's problem. His personality, well, that's a different story.

Cocky. Hardheaded. Selfish. Egotistical. Arrogant. He heard them all as he hopscoched around the NFL, a nomadic journey that had as much to do with his attitude as his ability.

"I really don't concern myself with that, to be quite honest with you," George said Monday after signing a one-year deal with the Chicago Bears. "I'm 36 years old, and if people want to harp on what I did when I was 26 years old, that's one thing. But I can just say this ... I am a blessed man."

"To get another opportunity to play football at whatever role I have, I'm definitely going to take advantage of that," he added. "I know there's people that always doubt me and doubt other people, but that's the nature of the business. I'm not any different than any other quarterback out there."

Oh, but he is. George was the No. 1 overall pick in the 1990 draft, blessed with a strong and amazingly accurate arm. He threw for 27,402 yards and 154 touchdowns in 12 years, completing almost 58 percent of his passes while throwing 113 interceptions.

But he's never lived up to the expectations that came with such talent, going 46-78 as a starter. The Bears are his seventh team, and he hasn't played in a game in more than three years. George, who turns 37 on Dec. 8, has been out of the NFL completely for the last season and a half.

The Bears, though, are desperate enough to give George another chance. Chicago (4-7) has already burned through three quarterbacks because of injury or ineffectiveness, and the offense has scored only one touchdown in the last three games.

"Football is all I know," George

**"I'm 36 years old, and if people want to harp on what I did when I was 26 years old, that's one thing. But I can just say this ... I am a blessed man."**

**Jeff George**  
Bears quarterback

said. "But I know the business and I know what it's like, and unfortunately what's happened to me in the past has continued to follow me, I guess."

George has been a magnet for criticism since he was in college, when he transferred from Purdue to Illinois after just one season.

He infuriated fans of his hometown Indianapolis Colts with a 36-day holdout in 1993, squabbled with coaches and alienated teammates with his aloofness and cockiness.

His reputation was further solidified in 1996, when he had a sideline argument with Atlanta Falcons coach June Jones in full view of television cameras. The Falcons suspended George for four games, then cut him.

He swore he was a changed man, that he'd learned from the experience, and he had trouble-free stops in Oakland and Minnesota.

But any repairs George made to his image were quickly erased in 2001, when he was with the Washington Redskins.

In the season opener, he had an animated sideline discussion with coach Marty Schottenheimer when George was pulled after four turnovers. He played one

more game before the Redskins cut him. He had a quarterback rating of 34.6, completing 23 of 42 passes with three interceptions.

George signed with Seattle midway through the 2002 season but didn't play.

"Jeff has been through an awful lot, which he will acknowledge to you. He learned an awful lot from it," Bears coach Lovie Smith said. "When I met him, I really got a good feel about him and where he is at this time in his life. ... He's at a stage in his life where he wants to be a part of a team and help the team win."

George wasted little time reaching out to his new teammates.

The Bears' offense is a complex one, with a playbook bigger than a Manhattan directory. After devoting the weekend studying the offense, he was already giving his younger teammates tips Monday.

"He's going out there with a mission to try and get something accomplished, which is trying to get the team better right now," receiver Bobby Wade said. "He was coming up to me, telling me little techniques, little things he was able to see that we need to improve on. It being his first day, I'm comfortable with him coming up and doing that."

Though the Bears have already said Chad Hutchinson will start against Minnesota on Sunday, receiver David Terrell was practically giddy about the chance to play with George.

"We've got Wyatt Earp and we've got the gunslingers," Terrell crowed. "It's going to be a fun last five games for us, I'm telling you."

While George thinks he can pick the offense up in a couple of days — there isn't much he hasn't seen in his career, after all — he won't push to start. But the Bears can't afford to be patient with another struggling quarterback.

If Hutchinson has any trouble, George could find himself back in the game only a few days after having to recruit buddies to catch passes at his old high school.



Jeff George blows on his hands to keep warm while taking part in Monday's workout, his first since signing a one-year contract with the Chicago Bears. George, who played 12 seasons with six teams, hasn't played in an NFL game since starting the 2001 opener with the Washington Redskins. The Redskins sent him packing later that year.

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# Patriots defense trumps Ravens

BY HOWARD ULMAN  
The Associated Press

FOXBORO, Mass. — Jarvis Green capped the Patriots' domination when he recovered the slippery ball in the end zone against a team known for its own defensive touchdowns.

That was the last scoring play in New England's 24-3 victory Sunday, a rare game in which the Baltimore Ravens had the second-best defense on the field.

"I think our defense showed that we can hang with the best of them," Patriots safety Rodney Harrison said.

New England (10-1) showed it could march through a rain-drenched field and the NFL's stingiest defense. The Patriots gained 314 yards, and Corey Dillon's 123 yards rushing were just one less than Baltimore's total output.

"We had no rhythm," Ravens coach Brian Billick said, "just couldn't get anything going."

Dillon ran for more than 100 yards for the fifth time in six games, boosting his season total to 1,121. Adam Vinatieri kicked three field goals, stretching his successful streak to 42 kicks.

"That was as bad of a field as I've ever played on," said Vinatieri, who has kicked big field goals with snow covering the ground. "This is a whole different set of tough situations. It's even more difficult for the guys handling the ball."

In their previous six games, the Ravens (7-4) scored four touchdowns, but defense and gave up only five. On Sunday, the Patriots offense didn't turn the ball over, despite the rain, while the Ravens lost it twice.

The most important turnover came just 45 seconds after Dillon scored on a 1-yard run and 2-point conversion for a 17-3 lead on the Patriots' first possession of the fourth quarter. Baltimore got the ball back, and Kyle Boller was sacked on the next two plays by Ted Johnson and Tedy Bruschi.

Bruschi's hit knocked the soggy

ball loose at the Baltimore 8-yard line. Chester Taylor, playing because running back Jamal Lewis missed the game with an ankle injury, dove after it but managed only to nudge it toward the end zone.

"The ball just spurted right out," Taylor said.

Green, a backup defensive end, didn't make that same mistake.

"I saw it slip out of his hands," Green said. "Then I went and attacked it, and it wasn't going to slip out of my hands."

New England won its fourth straight game despite having its top three cornerbacks sidelined by Law, Tyrone Poole and Asante Samuel — while Baltimore's winning streak ended at three.

All the Ravens could manage was a 22-yard field goal by Matt Stover 2 seconds before halftime.

The Patriots set an NFL record by scoring first in their 16th straight regular-season game, breaking a tie for the mark set by Miami in 1978. But the Ravens managed to stop another streak in the first quarter — 16 consecutive quarters in which the Patriots scored.

"Once they got control of the game, that's an awful hard team to beat," Billick said.

Baltimore had given up a league-low 14 points a game in its first 10 games and allowed just one offensive touchdown Sunday on Dillon's run with 3 seconds gone in the fourth quarter.

"That's a tough defense. They're known for intimidating people," Dillon said. "I'd rather do the hitting than be hit."

Then Boller got a taste of what his defense usually inflicts on opposing quarterbacks when New England, which had allowed the sixth fewest points in the league, went after him and sacked him twice, the last resulting in Green's touchdown.

"They're a great team," said Boller, who was 15-for-35 for 93 yards and was sacked four times.

"They force you to try and make things difficult. It wasn't raining so hard that I couldn't throw it."



49ers quarterback Tim Rattay fumbles after being tackled by the Dolphins' Jay Williams in the fourth quarter.

## 49ers prove to be weakest link

BY GREG BEACHAM  
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The Miami Dolphins spent the holiday week eating room service food and practicing thousands of miles from home, all to prove they were the best of the NFL's worst two teams.

And for the first time in Miami's dismal season, something went according to plan.

Randy McMichael caught a 15-yard touchdown pass with 10:35 to play, and the 49ers fumbled five times in the fourth quarter of the Dolphins' 24-17 victory Sunday, leaving hapless San Francisco as the league's only one-win team.

It was the game of the weak, the battle of the bads — a meeting of two once-proud franchises brought to historic lows by injuries, ineptitude, poor management and insufficient talent.

After last week's loss at Seattle, the Dolphins holed up in San Francisco for a second training camp of sorts. Largely thanks to its stifling defense, Miami finished its road trip at 500.

"If we would have lost this game after spending six days in San Francisco, it would have been really miserable," said cornerback Patrick Surtain, who re-

covered two fumbles. "To come out here with a win, even though these guys are 1-9, we showed a lot of heart. It was huge for us, and hopefully we can build on this."

San Francisco's surreal inability to hold on to the ball was the most eye-catching part of a game decidedly lacking in artistry, from the 16 punts to the seemingly endless series of gaffes and stumbles. Miami (2-9) snapped its three-game losing streak with just 200 total yards.

Capped by Derrick Pope's 1-yard fumble return for the clinching touchdown with 3:10 left, the Dolphins scored 17 points off San Francisco's fumbles in the fourth quarter to get the first victory for interim coach Jim Bates and starting quarterback A.J. Feeley.

Hopefully, Bates — the Dolphins' defensive coordinator until Dave Wannstedt's resignation two weeks ago — will remember only his unit's strong performance, which included eight sacks, and not the ineptitude of just about everything and everybody else.

"A lot of teams, when you are 1-9, you will not see the determination and effort week in and week out that we have given," Bates said. "It is special to be part of this group."

Miami held San Francisco to 228 yards — 69 on a desperate late-minute drive culminating in Maurice Hicks' score with 37 seconds left.

Tim Rattay passed for 181 yards and fumbled three times for the 49ers (1-10), who lost their sixth straight and surged past Miami for the inside track on the top pick in next April's draft. They've also got an excellent shot at the worst record in franchise history: The Niners went 2-14 in 1978 and 1979.

Once again, coach Dennis Erickson was baffled to see his offense waste an outstanding performance by the defense. Rattay's offensive line seems to regress with every game, and expected stars Kevan Barlow and Brandon Lloyd have been invisible.

"I don't care who you have playing, you can't operate like we're operating," he said. "We all feel helpless, sure. This is just not the way I envisioned us functioning on offense. We have no rhythm. It's been a mess, there isn't any other way to put it."

Fittingly for these teams, the game turned on turnovers. San Francisco linebacker Derek Smith returned a fumble 46 yards for his first career touchdown early in the fourth quarter for a 10-7 lead, but Surtain recovered Hicks' fumble moments later.

## AFC: Mediocre AFC teams benefiting from alignment

AFC. FROM BACK PAGE

Chiefs to rush for eight touchdowns.

If the season ended now, the wild-card entries in the AFC would be the Jets (8-3) and either the Broncos or Ravens (each 7-4). No need to get into tiebreakers yet, with five games left, those scenarios can get very complicated.

The way the NFC is breaking down, the wild cards are likely to be the team that doesn't win the North, where the Vikings and Packers are battling for first place, and the West, either Seattle or St. Louis. And one or both could be 8-8; the NFC West winner might even be 500.

Think about the Seahawks, who were routed 38-9 by Buffalo at home Sunday, but still lead the NFC West at 6-5.

It was the first road win in five tries this season for the Bills, who are 2-6 against AFC teams, 3-0 against the NFC.

Here's the good thing. We're still in first place," Seattle's Shaun Alexander said after the game.

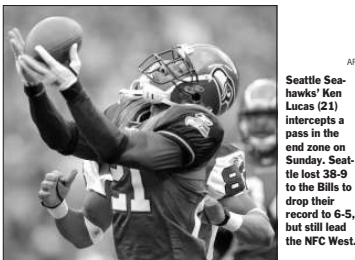
That's by default. If their division isn't the NFL's worst, then it's the NFC East — minus the Eagles, who clinched the division Sunday and are 4-0 against the other three division teams, with a combined victory margin of 135-50.

In fact, the East is the home of the poster boys for the NFL's incompetence: the Giants.

They have lost four straight, five of six and when Michael Strahan was lost for the season with a torn pectoral muscle, they basically decided to tank this season by giving Eli Manning a seven-game break-in period at quarterback. Manning was every bit the rookie against the Eagles on Sunday, going 6-of-21, throwing two interceptions, taking five sacks and finishing with an anemic passer rating of 16.9.

Yet at 5-6, the Giants remain very much in the wild-card race.

Del Rio's Jaguars? If they were in the NFC, they'd be on their way to the postseason.



Seattle Seahawks' Ken Lucas (21) intercepts a pass in the end zone on Sunday. Seattle lost 38-9 to the Bills to drop their record to 6-5, but still lead the NFC West.

# Saints don't have a prayer of stopping Vick in Atlanta

## Versatile QB throws for 2 TDs, runs for another

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The New Orleans Saints knew what they were up against — and there wasn't much they could do when Michael Vick started running around.

Vick added another play to his highlight reel, throwing a 20-yard touchdown pass to Alge Crumpler with 1:22 remaining to give the Atlanta Falcons a 24-21 victory Sunday.

This was vintage Vick.

He took the snap and looked left, but had to dart right to avoid the rush. Then, changing directions suddenly, he sprinted back to the left to get away from more pressure. A Saints player sprawled on the turf took a swipe at Vick's legs as he went by, but the quarterback managed to rattle the pass to Crumpler at the pylon.

"Hey, the Falcons have a secret weapon over there who is the league's worst-kept secret," Saints cornerback Mike McKenzie said. "He's from another world."

Crumpler isn't too bad, either. The Pro Bowl tight end boxed out Jason Craft like a basketball player going for a rebound, and easily made the catch when the cornerback fell down.

Crumpler also caught a 27-yard pass that set up the winning touchdown, finishing with four receptions for 103 yards. All of his catches were for at least 20 yards, improving his season average to 16.5 — astounding for a tight end.

Afterward, Crumpler sat at his locker, working out his per-catch numbers on a calculator.

"That's the only thing my dad ever talks about," he said. "He always wants to know what I'm averaging."

James Allen appeared to save the Saints when he stripped the



Falcons tight end Alge Crumpler, top, jumps to avoid Saints defender Mel Mitchell after making a catch in the fourth quarter Sunday in Atlanta. Crumpler caught the decisive TD pass in Atlanta's 24-21 victory.

ball from Warrick Dunn at the New Orleans 6 with 3:11 to go. But Vick still had time to bail out the Falcons (9-2).

The Saints (4-7) went three-and-out, and Atlanta took over at the New Orleans 47. Vick had nearly 2 minutes to work with, but he and Crumpler needed only two plays to get the Falcons into the end zone. They got things started with a 27-yard play, as Crumpler found a seam in the New Orleans zone.

"I always feel like we're going to score a touchdown," Vick said. "I have confidence I can do almost anything when I step out there."

Vick had a hand in all three Atlanta touchdowns. He passed for two scores, completing 16 of 29 for 212 yards. He also ran 16 yards for a TD and led the Falcons with 69 yards on 10 carries.

No one remembered the interception set up New Orleans' go-ahead touchdown.

The Saints looked much better than a high school team — the comparison owner Tom Benson made after an ugly 34-13 loss to Denver last week. But it didn't stop New Orleans from its sixth loss in eight games.

"Gosh, we played out hearts out," defensive end Charles Grant said. "When they find a way to win like that, it's a heart-breaker."

Atlanta is virtually assured of the third division title in franchise history, leading the other three teams in the NFC South by five games with five to play.

"We're for real," Crumpler said.

The Saints fell behind 14-0 early in the second quarter and were down 17-6 at the half before Aaron Brooks rallied his team. He scored on a 1-yard sneak and threw to Joe Horn on a 2-point conversion, pulling the Saints to 17-14.

Vick then made a huge blunder. Trying to set up a screen, he threw the ball right to Grant. The 290-pounder rumbled 8 yards to the Atlanta 30, and Brooks finished it off with a 7-yard touchdown pass to Horn with 11:56 remaining.

It was the first time all season that Atlanta had given up a lead in the fourth quarter.

Dence McAllister ran 23 times for 100 yards for the Saints, while Horn made nine catches for 101 yards.

touchdown run, in a 31-21 win over the Titans. Davis added seven receptions for 52 yards.

- Fred Taylor, Jaguars, had 147 yards on 22 carries in a 17-16 loss to Minnesota.
- Corey Dillon, Patriots, rushed for 123 yards and a touchdown in a 16-13 win over Baltimore.
- Nick Golas, Panthers, ran for 106 yards in a 21-14 win over Tampa Bay, a week after rushing for a career-high 121.

### Receivers

- Chad Johnson, Bengals, had 117 yards and a touchdown on 10 receptions in a 56-43 win over Cleveland.
- Keary Colbert, Panthers, caught a 44-yard touchdown pass, his second of the game, with 20 seconds remaining to tie Carolina to a 21-14 victory over the Bucs. Colbert finished with 72 yards on three catches.
- Michael Pittman, Bucs, had eight catches for 134 yards and touchdown receptions of 6 and 8 yards in a 21-14 loss to Carolina.
- Pittman, the starting running back, only had 25 yards rushing on 18 carries.



Denver Broncos wide receiver Rod Smith, top, is upended by Oakland Raiders safety Stuart Schweigert after a short gain in the fourth quarter of the Raiders' 25-24 victory in Denver on Sunday.

# A complete snow job by Raiders in Denver

By EDDIE PELLIS  
The Associated Press

DENVER — Leading by 17 late in the game, playing at home in the snow, the Denver Broncos looked well on their way to win No. 8 and a share of first place in the AFC West.

As it turned out, though, the Silver and Black looked more at home in the white stuff than Denver did.

Kerry Collins threw for 339 yards and threw three of his four touchdowns to Jerry Porter to lead the Oakland Raiders to a come-from-behind upset in the snow Sunday night, 25-24 over the Broncos.

"We could have packed it up, but we didn't," Raiders coach Norv Turner said.

Collins' final TD pass to Porter was the winner — on fourth-and-goal from the 5 with 1:49 remaining. Porter, who beat Champ Bailey for his first two TDs and another 52-yard reception, looked in his element on a winter-wonderland kind of night.

"It was hell out there," Porter said. "But it was cold, too."

After Oakland took the lead, Jake Plummer drove the Broncos to the Raiders 25 to set up Jason Elam's go-ahead field goal attempt.

But the snap was high, Elam kicked the lace-side of the ball and Langston Walker blocked the kick to preserve the win for the Raiders (4-7), who will surely

count this as a major highlight of a difficult year.

"I don't know if anyone outside our own group thought we could do this," Turner said. The Broncos (7-4) fell one game behind the Chargers in the AFC West with a game at San Diego coming next week. The weather will surely be better there. Coach Mike Shanahan wasn't using that as an excuse for this loss, though.

"Both teams had to play in the same conditions," Shanahan said. "They made some big plays and we had a few big plays, too. But they made the plays when it counted and found a way to get it done."

Oakland's winning touchdown was set up by a 63-yard completion from Collins to Ronald Curry, who a few minutes earlier made a spectacular one-handed grab in the back of the end zone to cut it to 24-19.

Collins finished 26-of-45 and showed no fear of Bailey.

His first touchdown to Porter came on a post route down the middle of the field in which Bailey let the Raiders receiver slip behind him. The second was on a simple slant in which Collins rifled the ball perfectly and Bailey couldn't prevent Porter from making the catch or tackle him before he crossed the goal line.

"The plays were there," Collins said. "It just happened to be Champ on the coverage. Our whole receiving group made plays."

## Sunday's NFL stars:



### Quarterbacks

- Drew Brees, Chargers, was 28-for-37 for 378 yards and two touchdowns in a 34-21 win over Kansas City.
- Matt Ryan, Falcons, went 30-for-39 for 412 yards, the second-most yards in his career, and five touchdowns in a 58-48 loss to Cincinnati.
- Carson Palmer, Bengals, threw a career-high four touchdowns, passed and finished 22-for-29 for 281 yards.
- Brian Griese, Bucs, went 27-for-39 for 347 yards, two touchdowns and an interception in a 21-14 loss to Carolina.

### Running backs

- Rudy Johnson, Bengals, ran for a season-high 202 yards and two scores on 26 carries in a 58-48 win over Cleveland.
- Willis McGahee, Bills, had 116 yards and four touchdowns on 28 carries in a 38-9 win over Seattle.
- Donnamick Davis, Texans, rushed for a season-high 122 yards, including a 41-yard

- Antonio Gates, Chargers, had seven catches for 92 yards and two touchdowns in a 34-31 win over Kansas City.
- Alge Crumpler, Falcons, had four catches for 103 yards and a touchdown in the game-winning 20-yard scoring reception in a 24-21 win over New Orleans.

### Defense

- Kevin Williams, Vikings, returned a fumble 77 yards for the clinching score in a 27-16 win over the Jaguars.
- Julius Peppers, Panthers, ran an interception back 66 yards for the score, blocked a field goal and had a 121-yard interception recovery in a 31-14 win over Tampa Bay.
- Deltha O'Neal, Bengals, returned an interception 31 yards for a touchdown with 1:43 to play, sealing Cincinnati's 58-48 win over Cleveland.
- Jarvis Green, Ravens, recovered a fumble in the end zone in a 24-21 win over Baltimore.

## SPORTS



Auburn needs USC or Oklahoma to stumble if it's to have a shot at a national title, Page 34

# AFC doomed by disparity

## Tougher conference hurting some teams' playoff hopes

BY DAVE GOLDBERG  
The Associated Press

After the Jaguars lost in Minnesota on Sunday, Jack Del Rio sounded like a coach who knows his team is in the wrong conference.

"The window is closing," he said, meaning the playoff window for a 6-5 team that is fourth in an AFC wild-card chase in which only two teams will succeed. Too bad they're not in the NFC: 6-5 would put the Jaguars just about at the top of the wild-card race in a conference where an 8-8 team or worse could make the playoffs.

That is the NFL in a nutshell this year. The NFC has one substantial team, the Eagles. The AFC has at least a half-dozen, from the Patriots and Steelers at the top through the Colts, Chargers, Jets and Broncos.

In fact, the Jaguars' 27-16 loss in Minnesota was a perfect indicator of the current makeup. Up-and-coming Jacksonville was within 19 yards of the go-ahead touchdown late in the fourth quarter when Kenenchi

Udeze sacked Byron Leftwich and forced a fumble that was returned 77 yards by Kevin Williams for the clinching TD.

In other words, a middle-of-the-pack AFC team on the road scared one of the NFC's top four.

Don't necessarily go by the record in interconference games — who cares that Miami beat San Francisco? — although the AFC leads 32-18. Still, history says that can be deceptive: When NFC teams won 13 straight Super Bowls from 1984-1996, the AFC won the season series six times and three other times the conferences tied.

But in that era, most of it before free agency and the salary cap, the top NFC teams were perennial powers.

The 49ers won four titles in that run; the Cowboys three; the Redskins and Giants two each; and the Bears and Packers one.

San Francisco, Washington, New York and Chicago in particular were consistent winners. The Cowboys, after sliding in the late '80s, were a team good enough to win the 1995 title under Barry Switzer, a very average (or worse) NFL coach who inherited Jimmy Johnson's talent.

All those teams were clearly better than the best in the AFC.

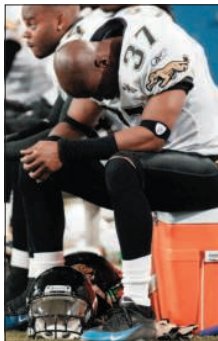
Buffalo lost four straight Super Bowls from 1990-93 and Denver three — in 1986, 1987 and 1989. The Broncos finally ended the NFC's run by beating the Packers after the 1997 season and the Falcons the next year, a late retirement present for John Elway.

So yes, these things run in cycles.

And yes, an NFC team could win the Super Bowl this year if the Eagles survive the demons that have caused them to lose three straight conference championship games. They are on a level with the top AFC teams, even if they were run over 27-3 in Pittsburgh on Nov. 7, their only loss this season.

Still, the standings after 11 weeks demonstrate the disparity.

All four AFC division leaders are 8-3 or better: New England and Pittsburgh (10-1); San Diego and Indianapolis (8-3). In the NFC, only Philadelphia and Atlanta (9-2) are in that category and the Falcons



Jacksonville Jaguars' Deon Grant (37) reacts on the sidelines during the closing minutes of their loss to Minnesota Sunday.

really aren't a complete team yet — think back to their 56-10 loss to Kansas City, a 3-8 AFC team, when they allowed the

SEE AFC ON PAGE 38



## Raiders' late flurry buries Broncos

Raiders receiver Jerry Porter breaks free from Broncos cornerback Champ Bailey during the fourth quarter. Porter burned Bailey for two touchdowns before hauling in the game-winner with 1:49 left as Oakland rallied in the snow at Denver with two touchdowns in the final 6:11. See story on Page 39.